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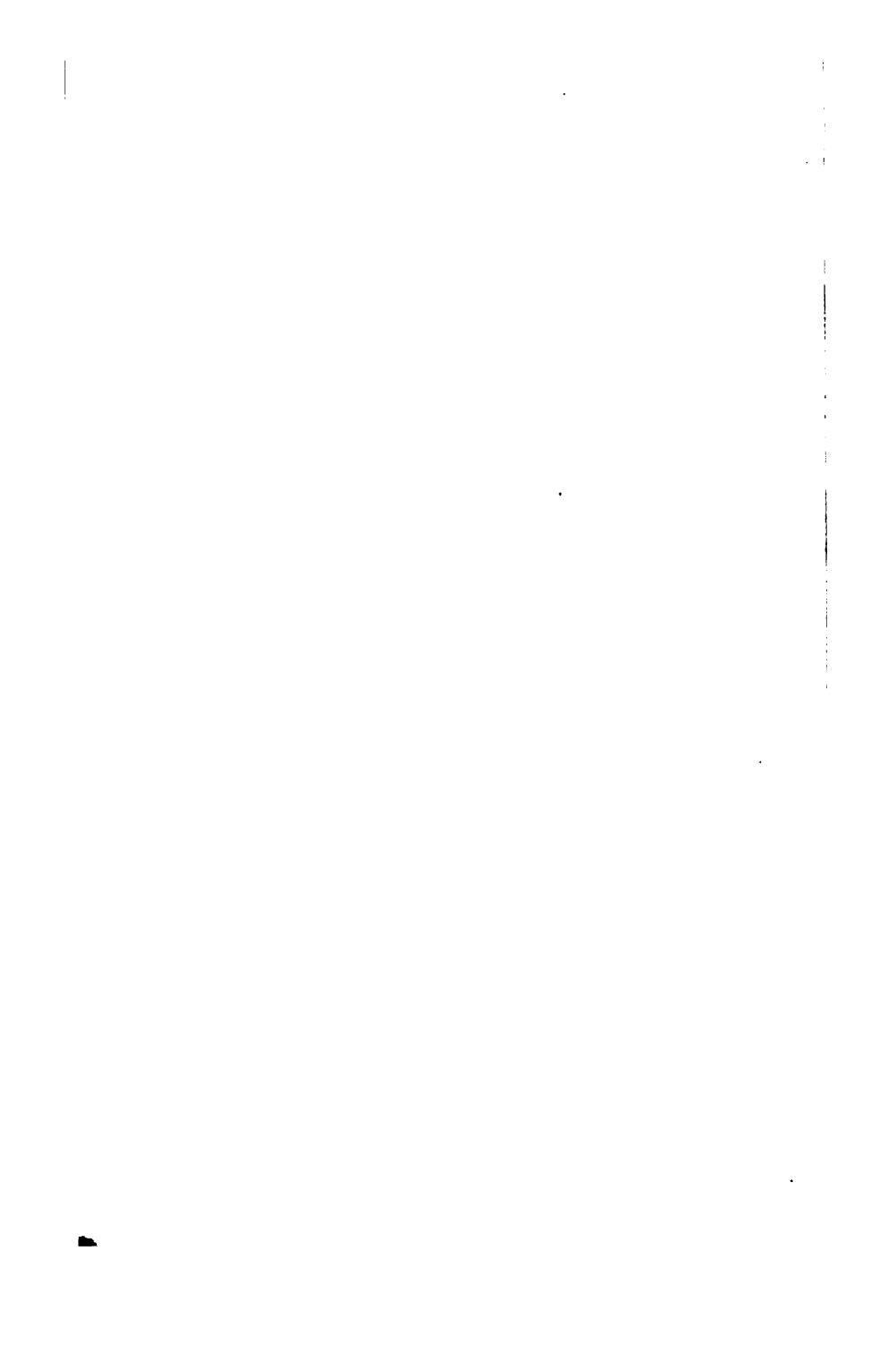
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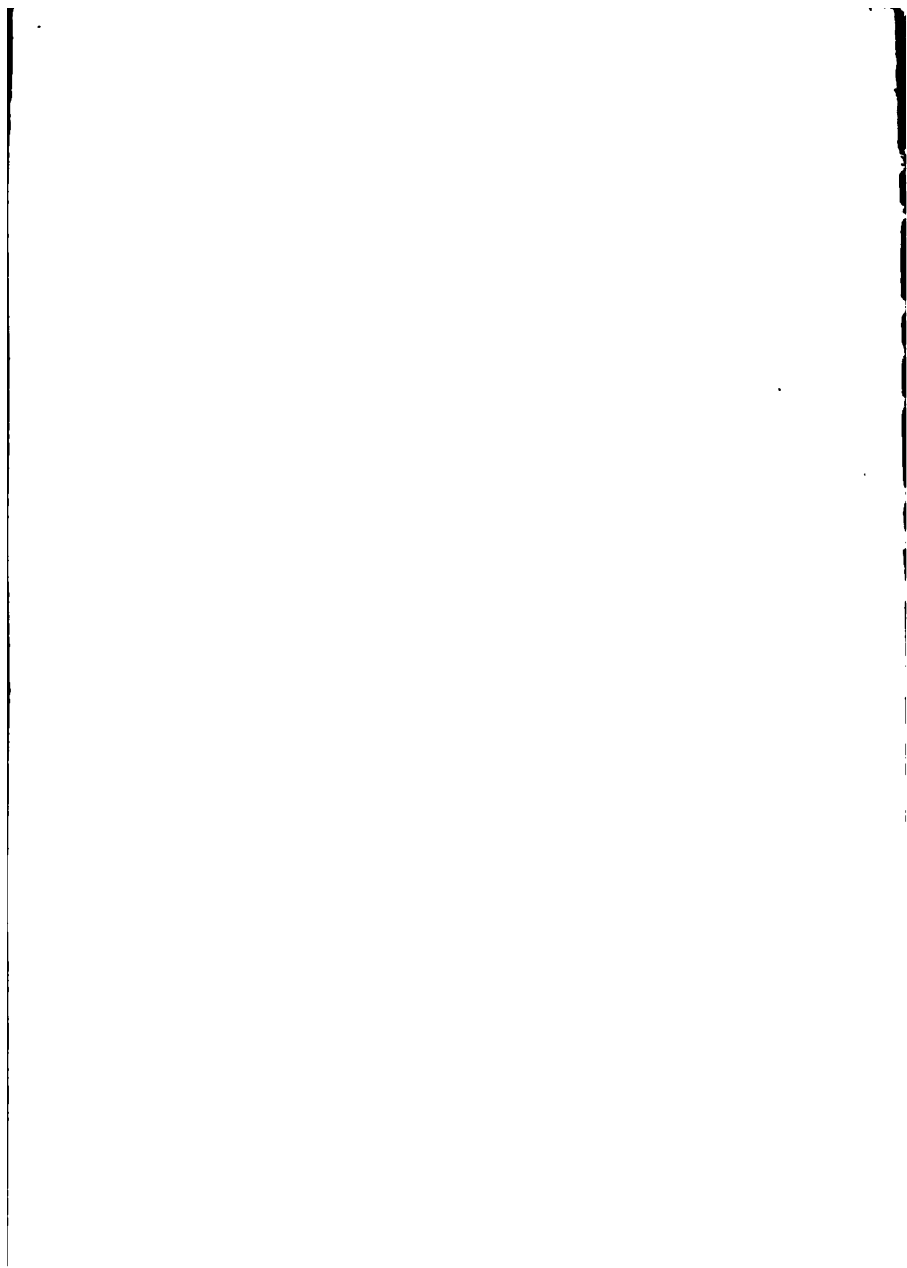
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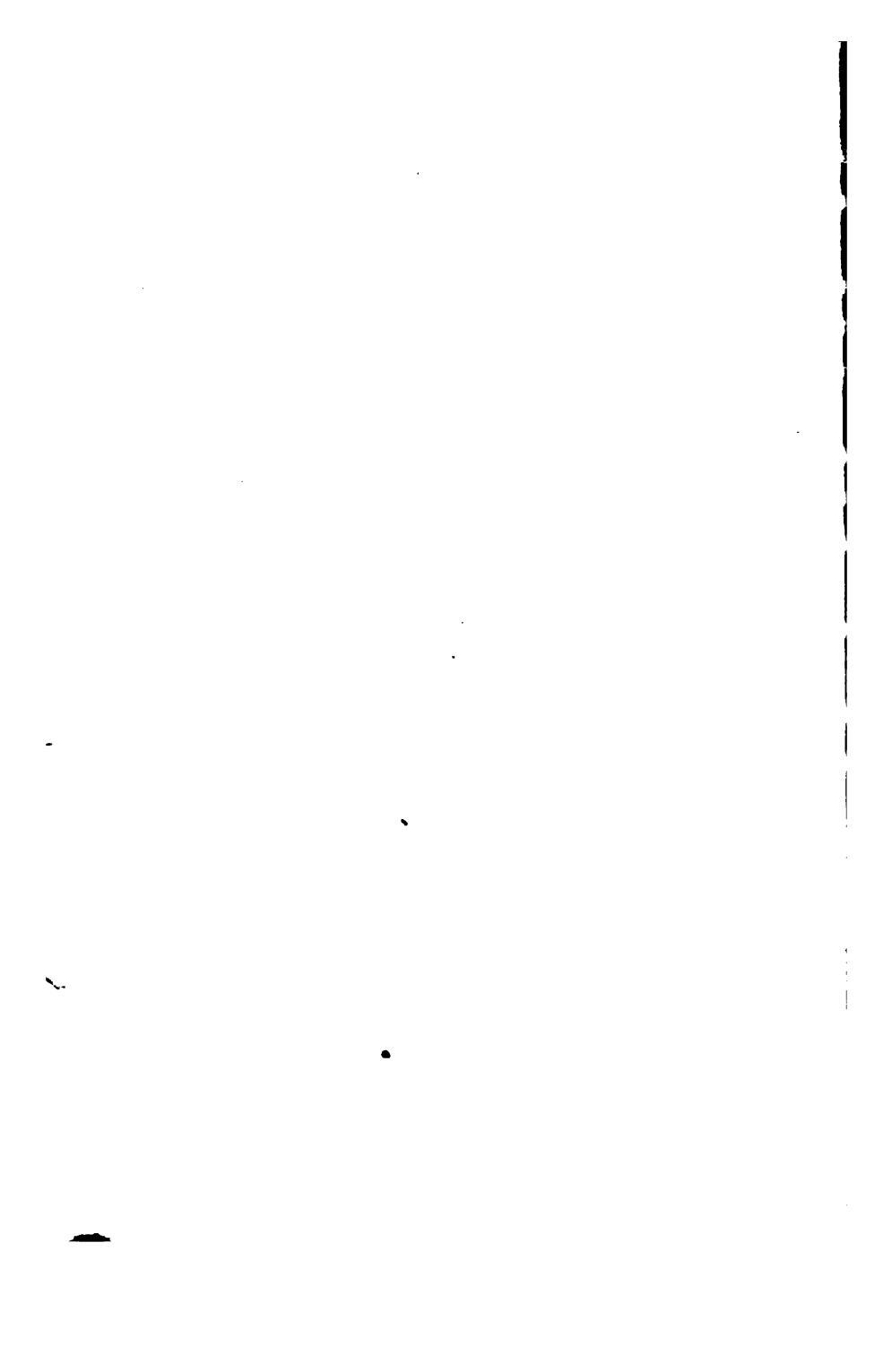
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OF



SELECTIONS
FROM
THE POETICAL WORKS
OF
A. C. SWINBURNE

FROM THE LATEST ENGLISH EDITION OF HIS WORKS.

EDITED BY
R. H. STODDARD.

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INTRODUCTION.

If the history of English poetry teaches us any thing, it teaches us that the succession of poets who have illustrated it since Chaucer is divided into two classes, one of which may be said to represent the characteristics of the periods wherein it flourished, while the other may be said to represent the characteristics of the line which it perpetuates. Belonging to the first class were the successors of Shakespeare, who was an evolution of the dramatic element of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the successors of Dryden, particularly Pope, who was an evolution of the satiric element of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and the successors of Thomson, particularly Cowper and Wordsworth, who were an evolution of the nature-element of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are, of course, other elements than those I have indicated, in the verse of these poets and their followers, for no poet worthy of the name was ever content to play upon one string; but it was rather as evolutions of these elements that they rose to distinction, and are remembered now, than as intense individualities such as from time to time appear in religion, in philosophy, in politics, and in art, and found dynasties. The first of these powerful personalities in English poetry was Christopher Marlowe. Born two months before Shakespeare, the son of a shoemaker at Canterbury, nothing is known of his childhood or youth except that he was admitted to the King's School in his native city,

where he remained three or four years ; and that he was removed to Cambridge, where he became a member of Benet College, and was matriculated as pensioner shortly after the completion of his seventeenth year. Two years later he took the degree of A.B., and, four years later, that of A.M. He is believed to have owed his maintenance at college to some wealthy relative, or some patron whose favor he won by early indications of genius ; and it is plain, Dyce thinks, that he was educated with a view to one of the learned professions : most probably he was intended for the Church. But churchman he was not to be ; for, like Greene and Nash, who had preceded him, he made his way up to London, and became a player and a dramatist. Precisely when this occurred has not been ascertained : all that is certain is, that his first play, the first part of "Tamburlaine the Great," was performed at the Curtain before his twenty-third year.

The earliest flowering of the English drama, the germs of which must be sought in the rude interludes of Skelton and Heywood, was the "Gorboduc" of Sackville and Newton, which was played before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall, about two years anterior to the birth of Marlowe. The production of "Gorboduc" was an important event, partly because it was the first work written in English for scenic representation that deserved the name of a tragedy, but more because it was the first in which the rhyming quatrains, or couplets, of earlier playwrights were supplanted by the new measure, blank verse, which Lord Surrey had discovered more than twenty years before. Professing to deal with history, — for Gorboduc figures in the old chronicles as a king of Britain, — it was followed by a series of more or less historical plays, among which may be mentioned "Appius and Virginia," "Damon and Pythias," "Cambyses," "Marius and Sylla," "The Battle of Alcazar," "Edward I.," "Alphonsus, King of Arragon," and lastly "Tamburlaine the Great." If Marlowe went up to London, as he is supposed to have done, with the expectation of finding a larger field for the exercise of his talents there than at Cambridge, he went at the right time ; for never before nor since was the demand for such talents as he possessed so clamorous or so constant. It had been stimulated, if not created, by three or four

men like himself, one being Thomas Nash, who had been his contemporary at Cambridge; another, Robert Greene, also a Cambridge man; and a third, George Peele, who had taken the degree of M.A. at Oxford. They were authors, in that they wrote for their livelihood, and hack-writers, in that they wrote what the stationers wanted. Of the three, Greene was the most popular; for he had a knack of scribbling stories that hit the taste of the time, and he could manufacture a play at a pinch when he had an order for one. They were loose and careless livers, rioting at taverns and ordinaries when a successful play or pamphlet put money in their purses, and skulking in out-of-the-way lodgings when their money was gone. The period was prolific in poets, of whom the most noted were Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, who, besides "Gorboduc," had written the Induction to "The Mirror for Magistrates;" Edmund Spenser, who had written the "Shepherd's Calendar;" William Warner, who had written "Albion's England;" John Lyly, who had written "Euphues," and several court comedies; George Gascoigne, who had written "The Steel Glass," and other poesies; and George Whetstone, who had written "Promos and Cassandra," which was one day to be of use to Shakespeare in writing "Measure for Measure." It was to make his way among poets like these, whose works were no doubt known to him, that Marlowe went up to London; and he made his way at once with "Tamburlaine," greatly to the dissatisfaction of Nash, — who, in his preliminary epistle to Greene's "Menaphon," satirized him and his measure, which he described as the swelling bombast of bragging blank verse, — as well as to the dissatisfaction of Greene himself, whose popularity as a dramatist was suddenly eclipsed. One must be somewhat familiar with Elizabethan poetry before he can fully understand the significance of the dramatic revolution that followed the production of "Tamburlaine." He should at least read "Gorboduc," and two or three of the plays of Peele and Greene, — say, Peele's "Arraignment of Paris," and Greene's "Orlando Furioso," — before he reads "Tamburlaine," which will amply repay him for that dreary preparation, and clearly demonstrate the superior genius of Marlowe. Conscious of his powers, and confident

of himself, he had a greater aptitude for dramatic writing than any of his contemporaries. His impetuous spirit refused to be fettered by rhyme, which he felt was inadequate for dramatic purposes; and, if Surrey had not discovered blank verse, we may be sure that he would have discovered it, for his use of it, all things considered, was the greatest discovery of all. He was the first to divine its capacities, and to develop them heroically. He knew what he was about when he sat down to write "Tamburlaine."

"From jiggling veins of rhyming mother-wits,
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threatening the world with high astounding terms,
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.
View but his picture in this tragic glass,
And then applaud his fortunes as you please."

The first part of "Tamburlaine," which was represented, we are assured, before Marlowe had attained his twenty-third year, was speedily succeeded by the second part.

"The general welcomes Tamburfaine receiv'd,
When he arrivèd last upon the stage,
Have made our poet pen his Second Part,
Where Death cuts off the progress of his pomp,
And murderous Fates throw all his triumphs down."

"Tamburlaine" was succeeded by "The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus," "The Jew of Malta," "Edward the Second," and "The Massacre of Paris." It may interest the reader of this sketch to know that the celebrated actor Edward Allyn, the founder of Dulwich College, played the part of Tamburlaine in a copper-laced coat and red velvet breeches, and the part of Barabas the Jew with a false nose. It would seem, indeed, as Dyce has pointed out, that, on the early English stage, the children of Israel were always furnished with an extra quantity of nose, as if a race so universally hated could hardly be made to appear too ugly. The career of Marlowe was

more illustrious, it seems to me, than that of any other English poet ; for no other English poet, so far as I remember, ever surpassed all his contemporaries at so early an age as he, or ever achieved so much distinction by his first work. Other poets, the most eminent, served their apprenticeship in the divine art : from the beginning, Marlowe was a master. That his success was resented, as we are told it was, by Greene and Nash, was natural ; for, not to insist upon the jealousy and envy with which the poetic temperament has always been credited, and of which they had, no doubt, their full share, it touched them in that vital part,—the pocket. They had the market to themselves before this young interloper from Cambridge set up a stall of his own, and had his wares preferred to theirs. It was monstrous, sirs, monstrous.

The personal history of Marlowe was probably not worse than the personal history of most of his dramatic contemporaries, — certainly not worse than that of Greene, — but at best it was bad enough. He was dissolute, debauched, profligate, addicted to his cups ; a swaggering roisterer, always ready for brawls. But others were as ready as he ; and among them was one Francis Archer, with whom he was feasting one summer-day at Deptford, and upon whom, while they were playing at backgammon, he suddenly drew his dagger, intending to stab him in the back. The intention was perceived by Archer, who avoided the blow, and, drawing his own dagger, struck him in the eye, bringing away the brains as he withdrew the weapon. In a few hours he was dead. Such was Christopher Marlowe, who perished in his thirtieth year, the greatest poet of his age, with the exception of William Shakespeare, whose greatness had still to manifest itself. The death of Marlowe was seized upon with avidity by the Puritans, and he was held up as an awful example of the judgment of God. He was a free-thinker, an atheist, a blasphemer ; there was no known crime that was not imputed to him. As no one man could have been guilty of all the wickedness he was charged with, and as one of his accusers was afterwards hanged at Tyburn, let us charitably render the Scotch verdict — “ Not proven.” The Devil himself is not as black as he is painted by the theologians.

The great gift of poetry — the greatest which Heaven has conferred upon mankind, and the one which, if well balanced and wisely exercised, confers the greatest pleasure on mankind — is a dangerous gift to its possessor. It separates him from his fellows, whose pursuits are of material and not spiritual things; and it creates for him a life in which they have no share. A law unto itself, it is lawlessness to them. If we cast our eyes back from the poets of the nineteenth century to the poets of the sixteenth century, — from Swinburne to Marlowe, say, — they will not rest upon many who command respect for what they were, as well as what they wrote; who were men first, and poets afterward. We find, in this small group of immortals, the gracious figure of Shakespeare, the stern figure of Milton, the thoughtful figure of Wordsworth: we do not find Burns there, nor Byron, nor Shelley. Many of the errors with which the personal history of the English poets is stained were, no doubt, temperamental; others appear to have been hereditary: but the greater number, I fear, were sheer wilfulness. The consciousness of great powers is a misfortune to all but the greatest minds, for these alone distinguish between their use and abuse.

“ Oh! it is excellent
To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.”

Power for power's sake is not poetry. Byron never learned this truth; but the young Keats — the manikin whom he wished somebody would flay alive — knew it instinctively. Hear him: —

“ A drainless shower
Of light is poesy: 'tis the supreme of power;
'Tis might half slumbering on its own right arm;
The very archings of her eyelids charm
A thousand willing agents to obey;
And still she governs with the mildest sway:
But strength alone, though of the Muses born,
Is like a fallen angel; trees uptorn,
Darkness and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres,
Delight it; for it feeds upon the burrs

And thorns of life ; forgetting the great end
Of poesy, — that it should be a friend
To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts, of man."

As we define poetry, which is not to be defined, so we divide the poets into schools, which, strictly speaking, are not schools. The poetry of different periods is marked by certain characteristics, which are strong in some poets and weak in others, and which suggest other characteristics that have not yet manifested themselves. What most impresses me in the poetry of Marlowe, — a feeling of prodigality, a sense of daring, the splendor of a fiery spirit, — I find in no poet since, save in Algernon Charles Swinburne. I find great qualities in the old dramatists, — in Kyd, in Chapman, in Tourneur, in Ford, in Webster, — strange passions, strong situations, the terror and the pathos of tragedy ; but, with the exception of the scenes of Webster, they are not the body of their work, but rather the light that is flashed upon it, and the darkness in which that light is suddenly swallowed up. When we have left the great race of the old dramatists, — of whom Shirley, Lamb says, was the last, — we have left the glory and the greatness of English verse. We are among clever men, — satirists and wits, like Dryden and Pope and their followers, writers of natural description like Thomson, writers of pastorals and elegies, like Shensstone and Lyttleton ; but we are not among poets, — not among the makers. There is that in Collins and Gray which commands our admiration ; in Cowper, which commands our respect ; in Burns, which commands our love, — which ripples in smiles, and melts in the mist of tears. But the fervor, the force, the elemental energy of the old masters, is not theirs. They are fettered by poetic traditions. These traditions were loosened by Wordsworth and Coleridge, who quickened the materiality of their predecessors by the injection of their own personality, which they mistook for philosophy ; and by Scott, who discovered the metrical romance in balladry, or recovered it from this balladry, wherein, like the famous old German emperor, it had long slumbered, hearkening in dreams for the striking of the hour that was to awaken it. The fetters were loosened, but not broken, until Byron and Shelley rose in their young might, and indig-

nantly rent them asunder, restoring to song its ancient kingdom, and to man his freedom of mind. One has not to read far in Byron and Shelley, before he feels that a new force is at work in English verse, and the determination of this feeling in himself is the determination of his intellectual condition. If he believes in the old order of things, it is a destructive force, and he condemns it: if he believes in a new order of things, it is a reconstructive force, and he applauds it. But whatever he believes, he recognizes the force. It is directed, in the poetry of Byron, against society and politics; in the poetry of Shelley, against society, politics, and religion. One struck at the State, the other at the State and the Church. Of course their poetry was informed with other elements than those that are implied in this brief statement, for they were poets as well as revolutionists, — creators as well as destroyers; but in the main it was what I have indicated, — a fearless, resolute warfare with whatever men worshipped and feared. It is not ended yet, but it will be one day.

“ For freedom’s battle, once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won.”

There have been no sudden makings of splendid names in England, and since the creator of “Childe Harold” woke up one morning, and found himself famous; but there have since been mornings there when other creators have woken up, and found themselves not undistinguished. It was not so difficult to startle the readers of English verse in the second decade of the century as in the seventh; for, whatever we may think of the poets of the former, it is certain they had not taken so strong a hold on their contemporaries as the poets of the latter, who had attained an excellence not before dreamed of, and who appeared to occupy every kingdom and province of song. The glory of Scott was the last red tints of a setting sun, and the glory of Wordsworth the first mild radiance of a rising moon, when Byron came like a comet, and paled their ineffectual fires. It was neither moonrise nor sunset when Swinburne came, but the full splendor of noontide, — the noontide of which the genius of Tennyson was

the golden light, and the genius of Browning the concourse of circumambient clouds. Between the fleeting shadow of these clouds and the girdling spaces of sunshine he stepped forth, — a slight figure in the garments of the Greek priesthood, — youthful but for the grave, far-off look in his eyes, and passionate but for the cold severity of his mien. Young priest of an old religion, he rekindled the fire upon its antique altar, and restored the worship of its imperious gods. Such was the coming of Swinburne with "Atalanta in Calydon." Regarded reverently at all times by the few poets who were scholars, the study of Greek poetry was productive of but little in England after Chapman finished his translation of Homer. Other translations of lesser Greek poets followed, and other translations of Homer, the chiefest being the heroic version of Pope, — which the great critic Bentley admitted to be a pretty poem, though it was not Homer, — and the blank-verse rendering of Cowper, which was more faithful and less readable. The genius of Greek poetry was alien to the English mind until it revealed itself to the young imagination of Keats, who wore it in his heart of hearts, not because he was a scholar, — for a scholar he was not, — but because he was a Greek. There are a thousand faults in "Endymion," but the unpardonable fault of falsehood is not one of them. It is true, everywhere true to the spirit of Greek pastoral poetry, of which it was the first, and is the last, example in English song. How thoroughly the genius of Keats was possessed with the beautiful mythology of Greece, and how rapidly it matured his wonderful genius, which in writing "Endymion" outgrew the lush luxuriance of manner which is the worst defect of that poem, we see in his Odes "To Psyche," and "On a Grecian Urn," — exquisite productions in the purest style of art, — and in the fragment of "Hyperion," wherein magnificence of conception and severity of expression are alike conspicuous, and where, for the first time, the epical height of the Greeks is attained by an English poet. The secret of "Hyperion" and "Endymion" inhered in the temperament of Keats, who *was* a Greek, as one of his friends declared. The secret of "Atalanta in Calydon" was an outcome of the scholarship of Swinburne; for only a scholar, and a ripe one, — a Grecian as distinguished from

a Greek, — could have written that noble tragedy. It demanded more than the affluent sympathy of Keats: it demanded a fulness of knowledge which was denied him, — knowledge of the intention which was the inspiration of Greek tragedy, of the laws by which it was governed, and of the end to which it was directed, and which was to be awakened by the simplest means emotions of pity and terror. If the inspiration of "Atalanta in Calydon" could have been drawn from any source other than the scholarship of Swinburne, I do not know where to look for it among the writings of his contemporaries or predecessors. He must have admired the Hellenics of Landor, who, like himself, was a Greek, though of a different type; but a profounder feeling than admiration for those noble productions, the spirit of which is idyllic rather than dramatic, was exercised in the shaping of his tragedy. He was charmed, no doubt, with Tennyson's "Ulysses," the repose of which is suggestive of the descriptive passages in Greek tragedy, and also, no doubt, with Browning's "Artemis Prologuizes," the art of which is of a sterner cast; but neither could have discovered his genius for him, or directed him in the path he had chosen. He could not have been helped by Arnold's "Empedocles on Ætna," still less by his tragedy of "Merope."

What Marlowe's "Tamburlaine the Great" was in our dramatic literature, of which it was the first ripe flower, the first triumphant voice, — such was Swinburne's "Atalanta in Calydon." There was nothing like it in English verse before it appeared, and there has been nothing like it since. It was the first and last awakening of the tragic Muse of Greece, — a stern, magnificent, awful spirit, speaking the large language of the gods, and moving to her end like Fate. The qualities by which the blank verse of Marlowe is distinguished — the strength which impelled his contemporaries to call it a "mighty line," its daring use, not to say abuse, of language, and its wild, stormy music — are conspicuous in "Atalanta in Calydon." The originality of Swinburne's blank verse is as absolute as the originality of Marlowe's blank verse. It is an instrument upon which he was the first to play, and whose volume of sound no hand save his could evoke and control. One needs to be a poet in order to comprehend

the difficulties it overcomes, and the triumphs it achieves, — the art, in short, of which it is so magnificent an example. But one need not be a poet in order to feel its solemnity, its grandeur, its greatness, and the weight of the stern, dark thought with which it is charged. And one need not be a poet to feel that he never before encountered such an opulence of diction, such a wealth of words, such a largeness of language, as Swinburne showers upon his song. And it is not merely language, of which there is a sufficiency in the poetry of the period, which is rather employed in the coining of phrases than of thoughts : it is the best, the strongest, the most poetical, with which the vocabulary of any modern poet was ever enriched. It is a royal treasure-house, the resources of which are incalculable and inexhaustible. Another quality to be noted in Swinburne, and one which allies him to the masters, is his sense of rhythm, — the music which is the inspiration and creation of metrical thought, and in which it lives, moves, and has its being. We find it in the great works of Shakespeare, and in his songs : in the early poems of Milton, — the songs in "Comus," and passages in "Paradise Lost ;" and occasionally in Beaumont and Fletcher. We do not find it in Dryden and Pope, or, to come to our own time, in Scott or Byron. They knew nothing of the unheard melodies of which Keats tells us, but played, with their pipes or their trumpets, the old tunes which had been handed down to them, and from which such life as they may once have had had long since departed. It was otherwise with Swinburne, whose sense of music was profound, and who had, besides, an ear of his own which taught him, that, much as the masters had accomplished, they had not discovered all the secrets of English verse, particularly the great secret which underlies all great poetry, — the compulsion of discords into harmonies. The combinations of sound which run so strangely through Swinburne's poetry, and which cannot but end, one would think, in the harshest discords, become, in his hands, rivers of sonorous music, which rush and roar along their several ways until they reach the sea, and are swallowed up in its long, tumultuous, endless harmony.

When the history of English verse in the nineteenth century comes to be written, Swinburne will certainly figure in one chapter, and as

prominently as any of his contemporaries or predecessors. This chapter will be devoted to the poetic drama, which will be considered — which cannot fail to be considered — a sorry survival of the poetic drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It will contain the great names of Byron, and Coleridge, and Shelley, and Browning, and Tennyson, and the lesser names of Maturin, and Milman, and Knowles, and Talfourd, and Bulwer; but it will contain no great works, unless the historian of the future shall persuade himself that “Pippa Passes,” and “Colombe’s Birthday,” and “A Blot on the ‘Scutcheon’” are such. There were great possibilities in Beddoes, who conceived dramatic situations as strong as those of Webster; but unfortunately they mastered him before he could master them, and so remained suggestions, — fragments, —

“Like the red outline of beginning Adam.”

There are two intellectual movements in this century, which are detrimental to, if they are not destructive of, the poetic drama. The first, the creative movement, which two centuries ago was exercised in the poetic drama, is now exercised in the prose novel; the second, the poetic movement, which was then exercised in a general lyrical exaltation, is now exercised in the narrow province of personality. Men who, in the days of Shakespeare, would have written plays, in our day have written novels; and other men, who, in those days, would at least have tried to write plays, are content in ours to write productions which they hope will pass muster as plays on account of the pretty personal poetry with which they are so lavishly bestrewn. Two gifts are indispensable to the dramatic poet: one is the power of forgetting himself, the other the power of remembering his characters. But these gifts have not been bestowed upon the poets of our time, who are always remembering themselves, and always forgetting their characters, and consequently are not dramatic poets. Swinburne occupies a prominent place among the crowd of contributors to the poetic drama of the nineteenth century, and occupies it justly, as it seems to me. There is nothing in the whole range of the English drama with which his trilogy of plays of which *Mary, Queen of Scots*,

is the heroine, can be compared ; and whether one likes it or not, it is certainly a remarkable work. It is remarkable for the skill with which he has delineated the character and passions of that strange woman, — siren of hearts, who clung to the hearts she broke, loving the love if not the lover ; angel of light and darkness, and beautiful in both, — and it is remarkable for its length, which exceeds that of any dramatic work in the language, as the length of "The Ring and the Book" exceeds that of any narrative poem. It is an epical tragedy.

Every thing that Swinburne has written is stamped with his individuality, — a confident and wilful originality, which is at once the source of his strength and his weakness. He held it in check when he wrote "Atalanta in Calydon ;" but when he wrote his "Poems and Ballads," it ran away with him, and he has never succeeded in mastering it since. He was poet enough and critic enough to know that "Poems and Ballads" would provoke censure. The world may be mistaken in many things, but it is not likely to be mistaken in so simple a thing as its own sense of morality. It knows — we all know — that we are not living in a state of nature. We have outlived its liberty, its wild will, its strong instincts, — the license of its thoughts and manners. We outlived all those before the first poet sang, and we will not let the last poet recall them. There is no poetry in them, there is not art in them : they are bad poetry, they are bad art, and, worse than all, they are hideously immoral. Some such feeling as this startled the countrymen of Swinburne in "Poems and Ballads." For many things, there is no limit to their vision when their eyes were once open. They saw nothing objectionable in the scene between Sebald and Ottima in "Pippa Passes," which they had been reading for twenty years ; and nothing objectionable in "Chastelard," which they were then reading. But "Poems and Ballads" shocked them into one of those sudden spasms of virtuous indignation to which they are subject ; and they straightway proceeded to magnify the poet's offences. They explained his veiled allusions, and dragged his hidden meanings to light. What an ordinary reader would not have understood, they compelled him to understand, committing in their criticism the very fault that Swinburne committed in his poetry.

What went to the genesis of these poems is a literary or personal secret which it will behoove the biographers of Swinburne to discover. He may have written them as so many dramatic studies, or he may have written them as so many expressions of himself. But for whatever purpose they may have been written, they did not and could not have come from a healthy mind : they are morbid, feverous, diseased, — sick unto death with the awful sickness of the soul. It was in his genius to write them, and live ; but not to regain the health, the strength, the sanity, that were his when he wrote "Atalanta in Calydon."

It is the fortune, or the misfortune, of Swinburne, that he has not been criticised : he has been praised and abused, but criticised never. He was accepted at once, as he should have been ; but he was not questioned, when he should have been questioned over and over. His intentions have not been examined, nor his methods scrutinized. He may be one of the masters of song, or he may be only one of its scholars : we have to judge for ourselves which he is. I have read, I believe, all that he has written, — with admiration for much, which I feel is very fine ; with regret for more, which I know is very faulty, He has great poetic gifts, but he is not a great poet ; for no man can be a great poet who is not a wise and solid thinker, and whose language is not large and direct.

I made a careful study of Swinburne's genius a year or two ago, taking for my text his only attempt at a narrative poem, "Tristram of Lyonesse ;" and, as what I wrote then expresses what I think now, I shall repeat the substance of it here. I began by saying that it was a little curious, in view of the tendency of the modern English mind towards literary studies, that no one had yet made a study of his genius and his method of working, both of which were remarkable, and remarkably faulty. They were faulty, I said ; for measured by the large methods of the great English poets, and the scope and style of their work, his work was exceedingly narrow, and his method merely a manner. He has published a dozen or more volumes of verse ; but he has written no line that lingers in the memory, and has uttered nothing that resembles a thought. This could not have been the

case if he had been gifted with unusual mental endowments ; for many a lesser poet has occasionally thought to some purpose, and has written verses that are remembered. One of his defects, perhaps his prime defect, is the brilliancy and force of his vocabulary. No poet ever excelled him in the profusion with which he throws off rich and picturesque and spirited words : he is a perfect master of epithets. His pages are luminous mists of language, the exact meaning of which, and their bearing upon the matter in hand, it is generally difficult to discover, they are so bravely put forth, and with such sonorous poms of sound. For his music is never less, but often more, than his sense. He is a wonderful musician, if nothing else. He appears to have a great command of words ; but when one looks into his manner carefully, one is struck with the really small number at his command, or, to state it more critically, with the rapidity with which the same words are perpetually turning up, and the little they really signify. The effects of brightness, for example, are indicated five times in the first nine lines of "Tristram of Lyonesse," and are scattered bewilderingly throughout the whole poem. Every thing is suggestive of imagery ; but when one attempts to grasp the imagery it proves a *fata morgana*, which disappears, flitting from page to page and resting nowhere. He abounds with allusions to the great objects of nature, the sky and the sun, and day and night ; but he never brings them before us as we are accustomed to see them, — for the simple reason, perhaps, that he has never seen them as they are, but as they seem to him through the haze of what he would call his imagination. The world as it flashes and glimmers in his lines is a very different world from the spot which men call earth ; obeying other planetary conditions than that, and exhibiting a flora and fauna of startling novelty. The qualities I mentioned were as evident, I said, in Swinburne's early work as in his latest, though they were not so abundant there, nor of such permanent significance. There was a time when he might have overcome them, or at least have put them under the restraint of his critical powers ; but, unfortunately, that time is past, for what at first was a tentative manner has now become a determined vice, which mars all his intellectual efforts. It is due to him to say

that it did not originate with him, but that it belongs in a measure to the poetic history of the period, and that it embodies the romanticism of Victor Hugo, in an English form. It runs through the first poems of William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, which preceded his, although Rossetti's first book was not published until five or six years after "Atalanta in Calydon;" and it is the *motif* of all the young English poets of the day, who are nothing if not romantic. The romantic poet is a gentleman, often a very young gentleman, who is wiser than the poets who lived before him, and against whom he protests, by his choice of subjects, and his manner of handling them. The difference between him and the masters is that they had something to say, and said it, and that he has nothing to say, and says it with an abundance of words. What the romantic poet chiefly protests against is the general intelligibility, the common-sense, of all the dead-and-gone English poets, — as strongly against Shakespeare and Milton, as against Byron and Scott, whose æsthetic misfortune it is that we can understand them. Each from his own point of view, and by the light that was in him and his time, looked into his heart and mind, and at the world of nature and men in which he found himself, and painted what he saw and felt, in imperishable colors. To mention these great names, is to think of a long procession of immortal figures, and to remember great thoughts that authenticate themselves. In a large sense, their work is Matthew Arnold's "criticism of life." Of what is Rossetti's work, or Morris's work, or Swinburne's work a criticism? As likely as not, of an exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery; for they are inspired by insignificant pictures as often as by great actions, and are never more themselves than when, emulating their favorite painters, they are piling up rich words that bear the same relation to poetry that the colors mixed on a palette do to finished pictures. Scott and Byron have hitherto been ranked among the romantic poets of England; but compared with this later brood of singers they are classical poets, for they are simple, direct, and manly. When Scott had a poetic story to tell, he told it, as in "Marmion" and "The Lady of the Lake;" when Byron had a poetic story to tell, he told it, as in "The Corsair," "The Giaour," and "Parisina." Even Keats, a more poetic poet than

either, was a masterly story-teller in his "Eve of St. Agnes," and "Lamia." A story in poetry differs from a story in prose only in the sense that poetry differs from prose; that is to say, it is more ideal in conception, and more impassioned in expression: in other respects it is governed by the same laws of composition, in that it concerns itself with feelings and actions which are within the range of human experience and sympathy; that it proceeds from the beginning to the end by steps which can be traced, and which are in the direction of a natural development of the subject; and that, when finished, it is its own excuse for being. No poetic story has ever impressed mankind without fulfilling these conditions, and without being intelligible to mankind in one hemisphere as well as another, and to-day as surely as thousands of years ago. The Greek Homer, the Roman Virgil, the English Shakespeare, were more than a Greek, a Roman, or an Englishman: they were monarchs of the world, who claimed and secured by their prevision and greatness the admiration of future ages. It would be unjust to compare Swinburne with those famous story-tellers; but we have a right to compare him with their successors in that delightful art,—such lesser poets as Spenser, and Marlowe, and Scott, and Byron, and Keats, who knew what went to the making of poetic stories, and knew how to narrate them poetically. There is no better model in English, of a pure narrative poem, than "Hero and Leander," Marlowe's share of which was finished before the summer of 1593; and there is no worse model than Swinburne's "Tristram of Lyonesse." It lacks every thing that a narrative poem should possess. It is obscure and tedious, to begin with: for, given a knowledge of the mediæval legend with which it professes to deal, it is with the greatest difficulty that we can follow Swinburne in his handling of its incidents; and, when we think we have followed him correctly for a page or two, we are suddenly bewildered into doubt by his extraordinary prestidigitation of persons, and places, and effects. We see nothing distinctly, in spite of the long descriptions with which his poem abounds; and if we have more than a confused guess at what he is trying to say, we are lucky indeed. If he has a meaning, he is generally prevented from reaching it by the blooming inexactness of his

vocabulary, which resembles nothing so much as the luxuriance of a tropical forest. The same defect marked the tentative career of Keats, while he was writing "Endymion," the sense of which often depends upon the good or bad luck of the poet in finding the necessary rhyme; but Keats outgrew this defect so rapidly, that, in little more than a year after the completion of "Endymion," he began "Hyperion." Swinburne wanders as aimlessly in "Tristram of Lyonesse" as if he had selected "Endymion" as a model, — a model that he has fallen short of, in that he nowhere reproduces that exquisite sense of poetic luxury, and that trembling sensitiveness to beauty, which are vital in all that Keats wrote, — even in the bits of doggerel which croon out brokenly in his careless letters. What he probably had before him in writing "Tristram of Lyonesse," or what he read before he sat down to write it, was "Lamia," the music of whose heroic lines, as varied and strengthened by occasional triplets and alexandrines, appears to have impressed him; but not powerfully, for he remembered it only at long intervals, and then merely as an effect which it might be well to try again, and in rapid succession. What Dryden and Keats intended and accomplished by these departures from the laws of the heroic couplet, he seems never to have perceived.

But enough of "Tristram of Lyonesse," which I have not reprinted, out of consideration for the readers of this volume, whose poetic patience I had no right to burden; and enough — more than enough — of criticism of Swinburne. What I set out to do was to select what was best in his poetry; and, as this seemed to lie in three directions, I followed them carefully, — first in the narrow province of Greek tragedy, next in the broad world of the English drama, and last in the enchanted region of romantic verse. If I have done what I sought to do, I have honored the genius of Algernon Charles Swinburne.

R. H. STODDARD.

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ATALANTA IN CALYDON.

TO THE MEMORY

OF

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

I NOW DEDICATE, WITH EQUAL AFFECTION, REVERENCE, AND REGRET,
A POEM INSCRIBED TO HIM WHILE YET ALIVE IN WORDS WHICH ARE NOW RETAINED
BECAUSE THEY WERE LAID BEFORE HIM:
AND TO WHICH, RATHER THAN CANCEL THEM, I HAVE ADDED SUCH OTHERS AS WERE EVOKED
BY THE NEWS OF HIS DEATH:
THAT THROUGH LOSING THE PLEASURE I MAY NOT LOSE THE HONOR OF INSCRIBING
IN FRONT OF MY WORK
THE HIGHEST OF CONTEMPORARY NAMES.

ἦκε δὲ Βαρέηθεν ἀπότροπος ἀλλί σε Νύμφαι
ἤγαγον ἰσπασίαν ἠδύπνοοι καθ' ἄλλα,
πληροῦσαι μέλιτος θεόθεν στόμα, μή τι Πασεῖδω
βλίψῃ, ἐν ᾧσιν ἔχων σῆν μελίγηρην ἔπα,
τοῖος ἰουδὸς ἔφης· ἡμεῖς δ' ἐτι κλαίμεν, οἱ σοῦ
δενόμεθ' οἰχομένου, καί σε ποθοῦμεν αἰεῖ.
εἶπε δὲ Πιερίδων τις ἀναστρεφθεῖσα πρὸς ἄλλην·
ἦλθεν, ἰδοῦ, πάντων φίλτατος ἦλθε βροτῶν,
στέμματα δρεψόμενος νεοθηλέα χερσὶ γεραμαῖς,
καὶ πολλὸν δάφνας ἀμφεκάλυψε κύρι
ἦδὲ τι Σικελικῆς ἐπὶ πεκτίσειν, ἠδὲ τι χόρδαις,
ρόσμενος· πολλὴν γὰρ μετέβαλλε λύραν,
πολλάκι δ' ἐν βήρσοισι καθήμενον εἶρεν Ἀπόλλων,
ᾠθεσι δ' ἴστεψεν, τερπνῶ δ' ἔδωκε λέγειν,
Πᾶνα τ' αἰμυνηστόν τε Πίτυν Κόρυθόν τε δύσεδρον,
ἦν τ' ἐφίλησε θεῶν θνητῶς Ἀμαδρύαδα·
πόντου δ' ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐκοίμισε Κυμοδάμειαν,
τῆν τ' Ἀγαμεινονίαν παῖδ' ἀπέδωκε πατρί,
πρὸς δ' ἱεροῦς Δελφοῦς θεόπληκτον ἐπεμψεν Ὀρέστην
τειρόμενον στυγεραῖς ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα θεαῖς.

ἔχω δὴ καὶ ἀνευθε φίλων καὶ ἀνευθεν αἰοῦδης.
 ὀρεφόμενος μαλακῆς ἄνθεα Περσεφόνης.
 ἔχω· κοῦκ ἔτ' ἔσει, κοῦκ αὐ ποτέ σοι παρεοῦμαι
 ἀζόμενος, χειρῶν χεροὶ θεγῶν ὄσιας·
 νῦν δ' αὐ μνησίμενον γλυκύπικρος ὑπήλυθεν αἰδοῦς,
 ὅα τυχῶν οἴου πρὸς σέθεν ὀλος ἔχω·
 σὺποτε σοῖς, γέρον, ὄμμα φίλους φίλον ὄμμασι τέρψω,
 σῆς, γέρον, ἀψόμενος, φίλτατε, δεξιτερῶς
 ἢ ψαφαρὰ κόνις, ἢ ψαφαρὸς βίος ἐστι· τί τοῦτων
 μείον ἐφημερίων; οὐ κόνις ἀλλὰ βίος.
 ἀλλὰ μοι ἠδύτερός γε πέλεις πολὺ τῶν ἔτ' ἔδντων,
 ἐπλεο γάρ· σοὶ μὲν ταῦτα θανόντι φέρω,
 παῖρα μὲν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ κῆρος ἐτήτημα· μὴδ' ἀποτρεφθῆς,
 πρὸς δὲ βαλῶν ἐτι νῦν ἦσυχον ὄμμα δέχου.
 οὐ γὰρ ἔχω, μέγα ἤ τι θέλων, σέθεν ἀξια δοῦναι
 θαπτομένου περ ἀπῶν· οὐ γὰρ ἔνεστιν ἔμοι·
 οὐδὲ μελκρήτου παρέχειν γίνος· εἰ γὰρ ἐνεῖη
 καὶ σε χεροῖν ψάσαι καὶ σέ ποτ' αὐθις ἰδεῖν,
 δάκρυοι τε σπονδαῖς τε κύρα φίλον ἄμφιπολεῦειν
 ὄφθαλμοῦς θ' ἱεροῦς σοῦς ἱερὸν τε ὄμμα.
 εἰθ' ὄφελον· μίλα γὰρ τύδ' ἵν' ἀμπαύσειε μερίμνης·
 νῦν δὲ πρόσωθεν ἀνευ σήματος οἰκτον ἔγω·
 οὐδ' ἐπιτυμβίδιον θρηνῶ μέλος, ἀλλ' ἀπαμυνθεῖς,
 ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἔχων ἄμφιδάκρυτὰ πάθη.
 ἀλλὰ σὺ χαῖρε θανῶν, καὶ ἔχων γέρας ἴσθι πρὸς ἀνδρῶν
 πρὸς τε θεῶν, ἐνέροις εἰ τις ἐπεστι θεός.
 χαῖρε γέρον, φίλε χαῖρε πατέρ, πολὺ φέρτατ' αἰοῦδῶν
 ὧν ἰδομεν, πολὺ δὴ φέρτατ' ἄεισομένων·
 χαῖρε, καὶ ἔλβον ἔχου, οἷόν γε θανόντες ἔχουσαι,
 ἦσυχίαν ἔχθρας καὶ φιλότητος ἄτερ.

σῆματος οἰχομένου σοι μνήματ' ἐς ἴσπερον ἔσται,
σοὶ τε φίλῃ μνήμη μνήματος οἰχομένου·
ὄν Χάριτες κλαίουσι θεαί, κλαίει δ' Ἀφροδίτη
καλλιχόροις Μουσῶν τερψαμένη στεφάνους·
οὐ γὰρ ἅπαξ ἱεροὺς ποτε γῆρας ἔτριψεν ἰουδοῦς·
τήνδε τὸ ὄν φαίνει μνήμα τόδ' ἀγλαίαν.
ἢ φίλος ἦς μακῆρεσαι βροτῶς, σοὶ δ' εἰ τι Νύμφαι
δῶρα ποθεινὰ νέμειν, ἕστατα δῶρ', ἔδοσαν.
τὰς νῦν χάλκεος ἕπνος ἔβη καὶ ἀνήνεμος αἰών,
καὶ συνθραπτομένοι μοῖραν ἔχουσι μίαν.
εὐδεις καὶ σὺ, καλὸν καὶ ἀγύκλυτον ἐν χθονὶ κοίλῃ
ἕπνον ἐφικόμενος, σὺς ἀπόνοσφι πάτρας,
τῆλε παρὰ ξανθοῦ Τυρσηνικὸν αἶμα καθεύδεις
νάματος, ἢ δ' ἐτι σὴ μαῖά σε γαῖα ποθεῖ,
ἀλλ' ἀπέχεις, καὶ πρόσθε φιλόπτολις ἔν περ ἀπείπας·
εὐδὲ· μίκαρ δ' ἡμῖν οὐδ' ἀμέγατος ἔσει.
βαῖδς ἐπιχθονίων γε χρόνος καὶ μοῖρα κρατῆσει,
τοὺς δέ ποτ' εὐφροσύνη τοὺς δέ ποτ' ἄλγος ἔχει·
πολλάκι δ' ἢ βλύπτει φάος ἢ σκότος ἀμφικαλύπτει
μυρομένους, δάκνει δ' ἕπνος ἐργηγορότας·
οὐδ' ἔθ' δτ' ἐν τύμβοισι κατέδραθεν ὄμμα θανόντων
ἢ σκότος ἢ τι φάος ὀξέται ἡελίου·
οὐδ' ὄναρ ἐννύχιον καὶ ἐνύπνιον οὐδ' ἕπαρ ἔσται
ἢ ποτε τερπομένοις ἢ ποτ' ὀδυρομένοις·
ἀλλ' ἓνα πάντες ἕει βάκον συνέχουσι καὶ ἔδραν
ἄντ' βροτῆς ἄβροτον, κύλλμιον ἄντι κακῆς.

ATALANTA IN CALYDON.

THE PERSONS.

CHIEF HUNTERMAN.
CHORUS.
ALTHÆA.

MELEAGER.
CENEUS.
ATALANTA.

TOXEUS.
PLEXIPPUS.
HERALD.

MESSENGER.
SECOND MESSENGER.

ἴστω δ' ὅστις οὐχ ὑπέσπερος
φροντίων δαίς.
τῶν ἂ παιδαλώμας τάλαινα Θεστιάς μύσαστο
πυρραῖ τινα πρόνοιαν,
καταΐθουσα παῖδες βαφουρὸν

δαλὸν ἤλικ' ἐπεί μοῖαν
ματρίθεν κελάθησε
σύμμετρόν τε διαί βίου
μοιράραντον ἐς ἄμαρ.

ÆSCH. Cho. 602-612.

THE ARGUMENT. —

ALTHÆA, daughter of Thestius and Eurythemis, queen of Calydon, being with child of Meleager her first-born son, dreamed that she brought forth a brand burning. And, upon his birth, came the three Fates, and prophesied of him three things, namely these: that he should have great strength of his hands, and good fortune in this life, and that he should live no longer when the brand then in the fire were consumed; wherefore his mother plucked it forth, and kept it by her. And the child, being a man grown, sailed with Jason after the fleece of gold, and won himself great praise of all men living; and, when the tribes of the North and West made war upon Ætolia, he fought against their army, and scattered it. But Artemis, having at the first stirred up these tribes to war against CENEUS king of Calydon, because he had offered sacrifice to all the gods saving her alone, but her he had forgotten to honor, was yet more wroth because of the destruction of this army, and sent upon the land of Calydon a wild boar which slew many and wasted all their increase, but him could none slay, and many went against him and perished. Then were all the chief men of Greece gathered together, and among them Atalanta daughter of Iasius the Arcadian, a virgin: for whose sake Artemis let slay the boar, seeing she favored the maiden greatly; and Meleager having despatched it gave the spoil thereof to Atalanta, as one beyond measure enamoured of her: but the brethren of Althæa his mother, Toxeus and Plexippus, with such others as misliked that she only should bear off the praise whereas many had borne the labor, laid wait for her to take away her spoil: but Meleager fought against them, and slew them: whom when Althæa their sister beheld, and knew to be slain of her son, she waxed for wrath and sorrow like as one mad, and, taking the brand whereby the measure of her son's life was meted to him, she cast it upon a fire; and with the wasting thereof his life likewise wasted away, that being brought back to his father's house he died in a brief space; and his mother also endured not long after for very sorrow; and this was his end, and the end of that hunting.

Chief Huntsman. Maiden, and mistress of the months and stars
Now folded in the flowerless fields of heaven,
Goddess whom all gods love with three-fold heart,

Being treble in thy divided deity,
A light for dead men and dark hours,
a foot
Swift on the hills as morning, and a hand
To all things fierce and fleet that roar
and range

Mortal, with gentler shafts than snow or sleep;	Euenus, wedded with the straitening sea.
Hear now and help and lift no violent hand,	For in fair time thou comest; come also thou,
But favorable and fair as thine eye's beam	Twin-born with him, and virgin, Arte- mis,
Hidden and shown in heaven; for I all night	And give our spears their spoil, the wild boar's hide,
Amid the king's hounds and the hunting men	Sent in thine anger against us for sin done
Have wrought and worshipped toward thee; nor shall man	And bloodless altars without wine or fire.
See goodlier hounds or deadlier edge of spears;	Him now consume thou; for thy sacri- fice
But for the end, that lies unreached at yet between the hands and on the knees of gods.	With sanguine-shining steam divides the dawn,
O fair-faced sun killing the stars and dews	And one, the maiden rose of all thy maids,
And dreams and desolation of the night!	Arcadian Atalanta, snowy-souled,
Rise up, shine, stretch thine hand out, with thy bow	Fair as the snow and footed as the wind, From Ladon and well-wooded Mænalus Over the firm hills and the fleeting sea
Touch the most dimmest height of trem- bling heaven,	Hast thou drawn hither, and many an armed king,
And burn and break the dark about thy ways,	Heroes, the crown of men, like gods in fight.
Shot through and through with arrows; let thine hair	Moreover out of all the Ætolian land, & From the full-flowered Lelantian pas- turage
Lighten as flame above that flameless shell	To what of fruitful field the son of Zeus
Which was the moon, and thine eyes fill the world	Won from the roaring river and labor- ing sea
And thy lips kindle with swift beams; let earth	When the wild god shrank in his horn and fled
Laugh, and the long sea fiery from thy feet	And foamed and lessened through his wrathful fords,
Through all the roar and ripple of streaming springs	Leaving clear lands that steamed with sudden sun,
And foam in reddening flakes and flying flowers	These virgins with the lightening of the day
Shaken from hands and blown from lips of nymphs	Bring thee fresh wreaths and their own sweeter hair,
Whose hair or breast divides the wan- dering wave	Luxurious locks and flower-like mixed with flowers,
With salt close tresses cleaving lock to lock,	Clean offering, and chaste hymns; but me the time
All gold, or shuddering and unfurrowed snow;	Divides from these things; whom do thou not less
And all the winds about thee with their wings,	Help and give honor, and to mine hounds good speed,
And fountain-heads of all the watered world;	And edge to spears, and luck to each man's hand.
Each horn of Acheloius, and the green	

Chorus. When the hounds of spring
 are on winter's traces,
 The mother of months in meadow or
 plain
 Fills the shadows and windy places
 With lisp of leaves and ripple of
 rain;
 C And the brown bright nightingale am-
 orous
 Is half assuaged for Itylus,
 For the Thracian ships and the foreign
 faces,
 The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.
 Come with bows bent and with empty-
 ing of quivers,
 Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
 With a noise of winds and many riv-
 ers,
 With a clamor of waters, and with
 might;
 Bind on thy sandals, O thou most
 fleet,
 Over the splendor and speed of thy
 feet;
 For the faint east quickens, the wan
 west shivers,
 Round the feet of the day and the
 feet of the night.
 Where shall we find her, how shall we
 sing to her,
 Fold our hands round her knees, and
 cling?
 O that man's heart were as fire and
 could spring to her,
 Fire, or the strength of the streams
 that spring!
 For the stars and the winds are unto
 her
 As raiment, as songs of the harp-
 player;
 For the risen stars and the fallen cling
 to her,
 And the southwest-wind and the west-
 wind sing.
 For winter's rains and ruins are over,
 And all the season of snows and
 sins;
 The days dividing lover and lover,
 The light that loses, the night that
 wins;

And time remembered is grief forgot-
 ten,
 And frosts are slain and flowers begot-
 ten,
 And in green underwood and cover
 Blossom by blossom the spring be-
 gins.
 The full streams feed on flower of
 rushes,
 Ripe grasses trammel a travelling
 foot,
 The faint fresh flame of the young
 year flushes
 From leaf to flower and flower to
 fruit;
 And fruit and leaf are as gold and
 fire,
 And the oat is heard above the lyre,
 And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes
 The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-
 root.
 And Pan by noon and Bacchus by
 night,
 Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
 Follows with dancing and fills with
 delight
 The Mænad and the Bassarid;
 And soft as lips that laugh and hide
 The laughing leaves of the trees di-
 vide,
 And screen from seeing and leave in
 sight
 The god pursuing, the maiden hid.
 The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
 Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
 The wild vine slipping down leaves
 bare
 Her bright breast shortening into
 sighs;
 The wild vine slips with the weight of
 its leaves,
 But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
 To the limbs that glitter, the feet that
 scare
 The wolf that follows, the fawn that
 flies.
Althæa. What do ye singing? what
 is this ye sing?
Chorus. Flowers bring we, and pure
 lips that please the gods,

And raiment meet for service: lest the day

Turn sharp with all its honey in our lips.

Althea. Night, a black bound, follows the white fawn day,

Swifter than dreams the white flown feet of sleep;

Will ye pray back the night with any prayers?

And though the spring put back a little while

Winter, and snows that plague all men for sin,

And the iron time of cursing, yet I know

Spring shall be ruined with the rain, and storm

Eat up like fire the ashen autumn days.

I marvel what men do with prayers awake

Who dream and die with dreaming; any god,

Yea the least god of all things called divine,

Is more than sleep and waking; yet we say,

Perchance by praying a man shall match his god.

For if sleep have no mercy, and man's dreams

Bite to the blood and burn into the bone,

What shall this man do waking? By the gods,

He shall not pray to dream sweet things to-night,

Having dreamt once more bitter things than death.

Chorus. Queen, but what is it that hath burnt thine heart?

For thy speech flickers like a blown-out flame.

Althea. Look, ye say well, and know not what ye say;

For all my sleep is turned into a fire, and all my dreams to stuff that kindles it.

Chorus. Yet one doth well being patient of the gods.

Althea. Yea, lest they smite us with some four-foot plague.

Chorus. But when time spreads find out some herb for it.

Althea. And with their healing herbs infect our blood.

Chorus. What ails thee to be jealous of their ways?

Althea. What if they give us poisonous drinks for wine?

Chorus. They have their will; much talking mends it not.

Althea. And gall for milk, and cursing for a prayer?

Chorus. Have they not given life, and the end of life?

Althea. Lo, where they heal, they help not; thus they do,

They mock us with a little piteousness,

And we say prayers, and weep; but at the last,

Sparing a while, they smite and spare no whit.

Chorus. Small praise man gets dispraising the high gods:

What have they done that thou dishonorest them?

Althea. First Artemis for all this harried land

I praise not, and for wasting of the boar

That mars with tooth and tusk and fiery feet

Green pasturage and the grace of standing corn

And meadow and marsh with springs and unblown leaves,

Flocks and swift herds and all that bite sweet grass,

I praise her not; what things are these to praise?

Chorus. But when the king did sacrifice, and gave

Each god fair dues of wheat and blood and wine,

Her not with bloodshed nor burnt-offering

Revered he, nor with salt or cloven cake;

Wherefore being wroth she plagued the land; but now

Takes off from us fate and her heavy things.

Which deed of these twain were not good to praise?

For a just deed looks always either way
With blameless eyes, and mercy is no
fault.

Althea. Yea, but a curse she hath
sent above all these
To hurt us where she healed us; and
hath lit

Fire where the old fire went out, and
where the wind
Slackened, hath blown on us with dead-
lier air.

Chorus. What storm is this that tight-
ens all our sail?

Althea. Love, a thwart sea-wind full
of rain and foam.

Chorus. Whence blown, and born
under what stormier star?

Althea. Southward across Euenus
from the sea.

Chorus. Thy speech turns toward
Arcadia like blown wind.

Althea. Sharp as the north sets when
the snows are out.

Chorus. Nay, for this maiden hath no
touch of love.

Althea. I woult she had sought in
some cold gulf of sea
Love, or in dens where strange beasts
lurk, or fire,
Or snows on the extreme hills, or iron
land

Where no spring is; I would she had
sought therein
And found, or ever love had found her
here.

Chorus. She is holier than all holy
days or things,
The sprinkled wa'ter or fume of perfect
fire;

Chaste, dedicated to pure prayers, and
filled
With higher thoughts than heaven; a
maiden clean,
Pure iron, fashioned for a sword; and
man

She loves not; what should one such
do with love?

Althea. Look you, I speak not as one
light of wit,

But as a queen speaks, being heart-
vexed; for oft
I hear my brothers wrangling in mid
hall,

And am not moved; and my son chid-
ing them,

And these things nowise move me, but
I know
Foolish and wise men must be to the
end,

And feed myself with patience; but this
most,
This moves me, that for wise men as
for fools

Love is one thing, an evil thing, and
turns

Choice words and wisdom into fire and
air.

And in the end shall no joy come, but
grief,

Sharp words and soul's division and
fresh tears

Flower-wise upon the old root of tear
brought forth,

Fruit-wise upon the old flower of tears
sprung up,

Pitiful sighs, and much regrafted pain.
These things are in my presage, and
myself

Am part of them and know not; but
in dreams

The gods are heavy on me, and all the
fates

Shed fire across my eyelids mixed with
night,

And burn me blind, and disilluminate
My sense of seeing, and my perspicuous
soul

Darken with vision; seeing I see not,
hear

And hearing am not holpen, but mine
eyes

Stain many tender broideries in the bed
Drawn up about my face that I may
weep

And the king wake not; and my brows
and lips

Tremble and sob in sleeping, like swift
flames

That tremble, or water when it sobs
with heat

Kindled from under; and my tears fill
my breast

And speck the fair dyed pillows round
the king

With barren showers and salter than
the sea,

Such dreams divide me dreaming; for long since
 I dreamed that out of this my womb had sprung
 Fire and a firebrand; this was ere my son,
 Meleager, a goodly flower in fields of fight,
 Felt the light touch him coming forth, and wailed
 Childlike; but yet he was not; and in time
 I bare him, and my heart was great; for yet
 So royally was never strong man born, Nor queen so nobly bore as noble a thing
 As this my son was: such a birth God sent
 And such a grace to bear it. Then came in
 Three weaving women, and span each a thread,
 Saying This for strength and That for luck, and one
 Saying Till the brand upon the hearth burn down,
 So long shall this man see good days and live,
 And I with gathered raiment from the bed
 Sprang, and drew forth the brand, and cast on it
 Water, and trod the flame bare-foot, and crushed
 With naked hand spark beaten out of spark
 And blew against and quenched it; for I said,
 These are the most high Fates that dwell with us,
 And we find favor a little in their sight,
 A little, and more we miss of, and much time
 Foils us; howbeit they have pitied me, O son,
 And see most piteous, thee a tenderer thing
 Than any flower of fleshly seed alive. Wherefore I kissed and hid him with my hands,
 And covered under arms and hair, and wept,
 And feared to touch him with my tears and laughed;
 So light a thing was this man, grown so great
 Men cast their heads back, seeing against the sun
 Blaze the armed man carven on his shield, and hear
 The laughter of little bells along the brace
 Ring, as birds singing or flutes blown, and watch,
 High up, the cloven shadow of either plume
 Divide the bright light of the brass, and make
 His helmet as a windy and wintering moon
 Seen through blown cloud and plume-like drift, when ships
 Drive, and men strive with all the sea, and oars
 Break, and the beaks dip under, drinking death;
 Yet was he then but a span long, and moaned
 With inarticulate mouth inseparate words,
 And with blind lips and fingers wrung my breast
 Hard, and thrust out with foolish hands and feet,
 Murmuring; but those gray women with bound hair
 Who fright the gods frightened not him; he laughed
 Seeing them, and pushed out hands to feel and haul
 Distaff and thread, intangible; but they
 Passed, and I hid the brand, and in my heart
 Laughed likewise, having all my will of heaven.
 But now I know not if to left or right
 The gods have drawn us hither; for again
 I dreamt, and saw the black brand burst on fire
 As a branch bursts in flower, and saw the flame
 Fade flower-wise, and Death came and with dry lips

Blew the charred ash into my breast;
and Love
Trampled the ember and crushed it
with swift feet.
This I have also at heart; that not for
me,
Not for me only or son of mine, O girls,
The gods have wrought life, and desire
of life,

Heart's love and heart's division; but
for all

There shines one sun and one wind
blows till night.

And when night comes the wind sinks
and the sun,

And there is no light after, and no
storm,

But sleep and much forgetfulness of
things.

In such wise I gat knowledge of the gods
Years hence, and heard high sayings of
one most wise,

Eurythemis my mother, who beheld
With eyes alive and spake with lips of
these

As one on earth disfleshed and disallied
From breath or blood corruptible; such
gifts

Time gave her, and an equal soul to
these

And equal face to all things; thus she
said.

But whatsoever intolerable or glad
The swift hours weave and unweave, I
go hence

Full of mine own soul, perfect of my-
self,

Toward mine and me sufficient; and
what chance

The gods cast lots for and shake out
on us,

That shall we take, and that much bear
withal.

And now, before these gather to the
hunt,

I will go arm my son and bring him
forth,

Lest love or some man's anger work
him harm.

Chorus. Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man

Time, with a gift of tears;
Grief, with a glass that ran;

Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven,
And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
Love that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light,
And life, the shadow of death.

And the high gods took in hand
Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
From under the feet of the years;

And froth and drift of the sea;
And dust of the laboring earth;

And bodies of things to be
In the houses of death and of birth;

And wrought with weeping and laugh-
ter,

And fashioned with loathing and love,
With life before and after

And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow,

That his strength might endure for a
span

With travail and heavy sorrow,
The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the
south

They gathered as unto strife;
They breathed upon his mouth,

They filled his body with life;
Eyesight and speech they wrought

For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labour and thought,

A time to serve and to sin;
They gave him light in his ways,

And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,

And night, and sleep in the night.
His speech is a burning fire;

With his lips he travaileth;
In his heart is a blind desire,

In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
He weaves, and is clothed with derision;

Sows, and he shall not reap;
His life is a watch or a vision

Between a sleep and a sleep.
Meleager. O sweet new heaven and

air without a star,
Fair day, be fair and welcome, as to
men

With deeds to do and praise to pluck
from thee.

Come forth a child, born with clear
sound and light,

With laughter and swift limbs and
prosperous looks;

That this great hunt with heroes for
the hounds

May leave thee memorable and us well
sped.

Althaa. Son, first I praise thy prayer,
then bid thee speed;

But the gods hear men's hands before
their lips,

And heed beyond all crying and sacrifi-
ce

Light of things done and noise of
laboring men.

But thou, being armed and perfect for
the deed,

Abide; for like rain-flakes in a wind
they grow,

The men thy fellows, and the choice of
the world,

Bound to root out the tuskèd plague,
and leave

Thanks and safe days and peace in
Calydon.

Meleager. For the whole city and all
the low-lying land

Flames, and the soft air sounds with
them that come;

The gods give all these fruit of all
their works.

Althaa. Set thine eye thither and fix
thy spirit and say

Whom there thou knowest; for sharp
mixed shadow and wind

Blown up between the morning and
the mist,

With steam of steeds and flash of
bridle or wheel,

And fire, and parcels of the broken dawn,
And dust divided by hard light, and
spears

That shine and shift as the edge of
wild beasts' eyes,

Smite upon mine; so fiery their blind
edge

Burns, and bright points break up and
baffle day.

Meleager. The first, for many I know
not, being far off,

Peleus the Larissæan, couched with
whom

Sleeps the white sea-bred wife and
silver-shod,

Fair as fled foam, a goddess; and their
son

Most swift and splendid of men's chil-
dren born,

Most like a god, full of the future
fame.

Althaa. Who are these shining like
one Sundered star?

Meleager. Thy sister's sons, a double
flower of men.

Althaa. O sweetest kin to me in all
the world,

O twin-born blood of Leda, gracious
heads

Like kindled lights in untempestuous
heaven,

Fair flower-like stars on the iron foam
of fight,

With what glad heart and kindness of
soul,

Even to the staining of both eyes with
tears

And kindling of warm eyelids with
desire,

A great way off I greet you, and re-
joice

Seeing you so fair, and moulded like as
gods.

Far off ye come, and least in years of
these,

But lordliest, but worth love to look
upon.

Meleager. Even such (for sailing
hither I saw far hence,

And where Eurotas hollows his moist
rock

Nigh Sparta with a strenuous-hearted
stream)

Even such I saw their sisters; one
swan-white,

The little Helen, and less fair than she
Fair Clytæmnestra, grave as pasturing
fawns

Who feed and fear some arrow; but at
whiles,

As one smitten with love or wrung
with joy,

She laughs and lightens with her eyes,
and then

Weeps; whereat Helen, having laughed,
 weeps too,
 And the other chides her, and she being
 chid speaks nought,
 But cheeks and lips and eyelids kisses
 her,
 Laughing; so fare they, as in their
 bloomless bud
 And full of unblown life, the blood of
 gods.
Althæa. Sweet days befall them and
 good loves and iords,
 And tender and temperate honors of
 the hearth,
 Peace, and a perfect life and blameless
 bed.
 But who shows next an eagle wrought
 in gold,
 That flames and beats broad wings
 against the sun
 And with void mouth gapes after
 emptier prey?
Meleager. Know by that sign the
 reign of Telamon
 Between the fierce mouths of the en-
 counterer brine
 On the strait reefs of twice-washed
 Samis.
Althæa. For like one great of hand
 he bears himself,
 Vine-chapleted, with saviors of the sea,
 Glittering as wine and moving as a
 wave.
 But who girt round there roughly fol-
 lows him?
Meleager. Ancæus, great of hand, an
 iron bulk,
 Two-edged for fight as the axe against
 his arm,
 Who drives against the surge of stormy
 spears
 Full-sailed; him Cepheus follows, his
 twin-born,
 Chief name next his of all Arcadian men.
Althæa. Praise be with men abroad;
 chaste lives with us,
 Home-keeping days and household
 reverences.
Meleager. Next by the left unsan-
 dalled foot know thou
 The sail and oar of this Ætolian land,
 Thy brethren, Toxeus and the violent-
 souled

Plexippus, over-swift with hand and
 tongue;

For hands are fruitful, but the ignorant
 mouth

Blows and corrupts their work with
 barren breath.

Althæa. Speech too bears fruit, being
 worthy; and air blows down

Things poisonous, and high-seated vio-
 lences,

And with charmed words and songs
 have men put out

Wild evil, and the fire of tyrannies.

Meleager. Yea, all things have they,
 save the gods and love

Althæa. Love thou the law and cleave
 to things ordained.

Meleager. Law lives upon their lips
 whom these applaud.

Althæa. How sayest thou these? what
 god applauds new things?

Meleager. Zeus, who hath fear and
 custom under foot.

Althæa. But loves not laws thrown
 down and lives awry.

Meleager. Yet is not less himself than
 his own law.

Althæa. Nor shifts and shuffles old
 things up and down.

Meleager. But what he will remoulds
 and discreates.

Althæa. Much, but not this, that each
 thing live its life.

Meleager. Nor only live, but lighte,
 and lift up higher.

Althæa. Pride breaks itself, and too
 much gained is gone.

Meleager. Things gained are gone,
 but great things done endure.

Althæa. Child, if a man serve law
 through all his life

And with his whole heart worship,
 him all gods

Praise; but who loves it only with his
 lips,

And not in heart and deed desiring
 it

Hides a perverse will with obsequious
 words;

Him heaven infatuates and his twin-
 born fate

Tracks, and gains on him, scenting sins
 far off,

And the swift hounds of violent death devour.	And filled with gracious and memorial fame
Be man at one with equal minded gods, So shall he prosper; not through laws torn up,	Lands loved of summer or washed by violent seas,
Violated rule and a new face of things. A woman armed makes war upon herself,	Towns populous and many unfooted ways,
Unwomanlike, and treads down use and wont	And alien lips and native with their own.
And the sweet common honor that she hath,	But when white age and venerable death
Love, and the cry of children, and the hand	Mow down the strength and life within their limbs,
Trothplight and mutual mouth of marriages.	Drain out the blood and darken their clear eyes,
This doth she, being unloved; whom if one love,	Immortal honor is on them, having past
Not fire nor iron and the wide-mouthed wars	Through splendid life and death desirable
Are deadlier than her lips or braided hair.	To the clear seat and remote throne of souls,
For of the one comes poison, and a curse	Lands undiscoverable in the unheard-of west,
Falls from the other and burns the lives of men.	Round which the strong stream of a sacred sea
But thou, son, be not filled with evil dreams,	Rolls without wind forever, and the snow
Nor with desire of these things; for with time	There shows not her white wings and windy feet,
Blind love burns out; but if one feed it full	Nor thunder nor swift rain saith any thing,
Till some discoloring stain dyes all his life,	Nor the sun burns, but all things rest and thrive;
He shall keep nothing praiseworthy, nor die	And these, filled full of days, divine and dead,
The sweet wise death of old men honorable,	Sages and singers fiery from the god,
Who have lived out all the length of all their years	And such as loved their land and all things good
Blameless, and seen well-pleased the face of gods,	And, best beloved of best men, liberty,
And without shame and without fear have wrought	Free lives and lips, free hands of men free-born,
Things memorable, and while their days held out	And whatsoever on earth was honorable
In sight of all men and the sun's great light	And whatsoever of all the ephemeral seed,
Have gat them glory and given of their own praise	Live there a life no liker to the gods
To the earth that bare them and the day that bred,	But nearer than their life of terrene days.
Home friends and far-off hospitalities,	Love thou such life, and look for such a death.
	Put from the light and fiery dreams of love
	Spring heavy sorrows and a sleepless life,

<p>Visions not dreams, whose lids no charm shall close, Nor song assuage them waking; and swift death Crushes with sterile feet the unripening ear, Treads out the timeless vintage; whom do thou Eschewing embrace the luck of this thy life, Not without honor; and it shall bear to thee Such fruit as men reap from spent hours and wear, Few men, but happy; of whom be thou, O son, Happiest, if thou submit thy soul to fate, And set thine eyes and heart on hopes high-born And divine deeds and abstinence divine. So shalt thou be toward all men all thy days As light and might communicable, and burn From heaven among the stars above the hours, And break not as a man breaks nor burn down: For to whom other of all heroic names Have the gods given his life in hand as thine? And gloriously hast thou lived, and made thy life To me that bare thee and to all men born Thankworthy, a praise forever; and hast won fame When wild wars broke all round thy father's house, And the mad people of windy mountain ways Laid spears against us like a sea, and all Ætolia thundered with Thessalian hoofs; Yet these, as wind baffles the foam, and beats Straight back the relaxed ripple, didst thou break And loosen all their lances, till undone And man from man they fell; for ye twain stood</p>	<p>God against god, Ares and Artemis, And thou the mightier, wherefore she unleashed A sharp-toothed curse thou too shalt overcome; For in the greener blossom of thy life Ere the full blade caught flower, and when time gave Respite, thou didst not slacken soul nor sleep, But with great hand and heart seek praise of men Out of sharp straits and many a griev- ous thing, Seeing the strange foam of undivided seas On channels never sailed in, and by shores Where the old winds cease not blowing, and all the night Thunders, and day is no delight to men. <i>Chorus.</i> Meleager, a noble wisdom and fair words The gods have given this woman: hear thou these. <i>Meleager.</i> O mother, I am not fain to strive in speech Nor set my mouth against thee, who art wise Even as they say, and full of sacred words. But one thing I know surely, and cleave to this; That though I be not subtle of wit as thou Nor womanlike to weave sweet words, and melt Mutable minds of wise men as with fire, I too, doing justly and reverencing the gods, Shall not want wit to see what things be right. For whom they love and whom reject, being gods, There is no man but seeth, and in good time Submits himself, refraining all his heart. And I too, as thou sayest, have seen great things; Seen otherwhere, but chiefly when the sail</p>
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First caught between stretched ropes the roaring west,	The whole white Euxine clash together and fall
And all our oars smote eastward, and the wind	Full-mouthed, and thunderous from a thousand throats :
First flung round faces of seafaring men White splendid snow-flakes of the sun- dering foam,	Yet we drew thither, and won the fleece, and won
And the first furrow in virginal green sea	Medea, deadlier than the sea; but there
Followed the plunging ploughshare of hewn pine,	Seeing many a wonder, and fearful things to men,
And closed, as when deep sleep sub- dues man's breath	I saw not one thing like this one seen here,
Lips close and heart subsides; and clos- ing, shone	Most fair and fearful, feminine, a god, Faultless; whom I that love not, being unlike,
Sunlike with many a Nereid's hair, and moved	Fear, and give honor, and choose from all the gods.
Round many a trembling mouth of doubtful gods,	<i>Eneus.</i> Lady, the daughter of Thes- tius, and thou, son,
Y Risen out of sunless and sonorous gulfs Through waning water and into shallow light,	Not ignorant of your strife nor light of wit,
That watched us; and when flying the dove was snared	Scared with vain dreams and fluttering like spent fire,
As with men's hands, but we shot after and sped	I come to judge between you, but a king
Clear through the irremeable Symple- gades;	Full of past days and wise from years endured.
And chieftiest when hoar beach and herbless cliff	Nor thee I praise, who art fain to undo things done :
Stood out ahead from Colchis, and we heard	Nor thee, who art swift to esteem them overmuch.
Clefts hoarse with wind, and saw through narrowing reefs	For what the hours have given is given, and this
The lightning of the intolerable wave Flash, and the white wet flame of break- ers burn	Changeless; howbeit these change, and in good time
Far under a kindling south-wind, as a lamp	Devise new things and good, not one thing still.
Burns and bends all its blowing flame one way;	Us have they sent now, at our need for help,
Wild heights untravelled of the wind, and vales	Among men armed a woman, foreign born,
Cloven seaward by their violent streams, and white	Virgin, not like the natural flower of things
With bitter flowers and bright salt scurf of brine;	That grows and bears, and brings forth fruit, and dies;
Heard sweep their sharp swift gales, and bowing birdwise	Unlovable, no light for a husband's house,
Shriek with birds' voices, and with furi- ous feet	Espoused; a glory among unwedded girls,
Tread loose the long skirts of a storm; and saw	And chosen of gods who reverence maidenhood.
	These too we honor in honoring her - but thou,

<p>Abstain thy feet from following, and thine eyes</p> <p>From amorous touch; nor set toward hers thine heart, Son, lest hate bear no deadlier fruit than love.</p> <p><i>Althæa.</i> O king, thou art wise, but wisdom halts; and just, But the gods love not justice more than fate, And smite the righteous and the violent mouth, And mix with insolent blood the rever- ent man's, And bruise the holier as the lying lips. Enough; for wise words fail me, and my heart Takes fire and trembles flamewise, O my son, O child, for thine head's sake; mine eyes wax thick, Turning toward thee, so goodly a weap- oned man, So glorious; and for love of thine own eyes They are darkened, and tears burn them, fierce as fire, And my lips pause and my soul sinks with love. But by thine hand, by thy sweet life and eyes, By thy great heart and these clasped knees, O son, I pray thee that thou slay me not with thee. For there was never a mother woman- born Loved her sons better; and never a queen of men More perfect in her heart toward whom she loved. For what lies light on many and they forget, Small things and transitory as a wind o' the sea, I forget never; I have seen thee all thine years A man in arms, strong and a joy to men Seeing thine head glitter and thine hand burn its way Through a heavy and iron furrow of sundering spears;</p>	<p>But always also a flower of three suns old, The small one thing that lying drew down my life To lie with thee and feed thee; a child and weak, Mine, a delight to no man, sweet to me. Who then sought to thee? who gat help? who knew If thou wert goodly? nay, no man at all. Or what sea saw thee, or sounded with thine oar, Child? or what strange land shone with war through thee? But fair for me thou wert, O little life, Fruitless, the fruit of mine own flesh, and blind, More than much gold, ungrown, a fool- ish flower. For silver nor bright snow nor feather of foam Was whiter, and no gold yellower than thine hair, O child, my child; and now thou art lordlier grown, Not lovelier, nor a new thing in mine eyes, I charge thee by thy soul and this my breast, Fear thou the gods and me and thine own heart, Lest all these turn against thee; for who knows What wind upon what wave of altering time Shall speak a storm and blow calamity? And there is nothing stabile in the world But the gods break it; yet not less, fair son, If but one thing be stronger, if one en- dure, Surely the bitter and the rooted love That burns between us, going from me to thee, Shall more endure than all things. What dost thou, Following strange loves? why wilt thou kill mine heart? Lo, I talk wild and windy words, and fall</p>
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From my dear wife, and seem of mine,
 Two set
 Testimony, instrument, in-sealed, and
 My mind.
 That was my crown, bread, and mine
 Heart is of me.
 And I am raised in my soul, and stand
 Ashamed, as a heart within, that I am
 In-sight.
 Love is thou wilt, and it thou wilt not,
 I am.
 The gods have given thee the use
 Of sleep.
 Thou shalt not die as men die, but
 Time end
 Fallen upon thee shall break me in-
 sence.
Marenon Queen, my whole heart is
 In thee with my tears.
 And my limbs yearn with pity of thee,
 and love
 Compels with grief mine eyes and in-
 sence breath:
 For what thou art I know thee, and
 this thy breast
 And thy fair eyes I worship, and an
 bound
 Toward thee in spirit and love thee is
 all my soul.
 For there is nothing dearer to men
 Than the sweet face of mothers, and
 the night.
 For what shall be, let be: for as the day
 Once only lives a life, and is not found.
 Time and the funeral year are more
 than we,
 And these lay bold upon us: but thou,
 God,
 Zeus, the sole steersman of the helm of
 things,
 Father, be swift to see us, and as thou
 wilt
 Help: or if adverse, as thou wilt,
 refrain.
Chorus. We have seen thee, O Love,
 thou art fair; thou art goodly, O
 Love;
 Thy wings make light in the air as the
 wings of a dove.
 Thy feet are as winds that divide the
 stream of the sea;
 Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the
 garment of thee.

Thou art swift and subtle and blind as
 a flame of fire;
 Before thee the laughter, behind thee
 the tears of desire;
 And thou go forth beside thee, a man
 with a maid;
 Her eyes are the eyes of a bride whom
 laughter makes afraid;
 As the breach in the buds that stir is
 her bridal breath:
 But Fate is the name of her; and his
 name is Death.
 For an evil blossom was born
 Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood,
 Blood-red and bitter of fruit,
 And the seed of it laughter and
 tears.
 And the leaves of it madness and scorn:
 A bitter shower from the bud,
 Spring of the sea without root,
 Sprang without graft from the
 years.
 The web of the world was unorn
 That is woven of the day on the
 night.
 The hair of the hours was not white
 Nor the raiment of time overworn,
 When a wonder, a world's delight,
 A peerless goddess was born:
 And the waves of the sea as she came
 Cleave, and the foam at her feet,
 Fawning, rejoiced to bring forth
 A deadly blossom, a flame
 Filling the heavens with heat
 To the cold white ends of the north.
 And in air the clamorous birds,
 And men upon earth that hear
 Sweet articulate words
 Sweetly divided apart,
 And in shallow and channel and mere
 The rapid and footless herds,
 Rejoiced, being foolish of heart.
 For all they said upon earth,
 She is fair, she is white like a dove,
 And the life of the world in her
 breath
 Breathes, and is born at her birth,
 For they knew thee for mother of love,
 And knew thee not mother of death

What hadst thou to do being born,
 Mother, when winds were at ease,
 As a flower of the springtime of corn,
 A flower of the foam of the seas?
 For bitter thou wast from thy birth,
 Aphrodite, a mother of strife;
 For before thee some rest was on earth,
 A little respite from tears,
 A little pleasure of life;
 For life was not then as thou art,
 But as one that waxeth in years
 Sweet-spoken, a fruitful wife;
 Earth had no thorn, and desire
 No sting, neither death any dart;
 What hadst thou to do amongst
 these,
 Thou, clothed with a burning fire,
 Thou, girt with sorrow of heart,
 Thou, sprung of the seed of the
 seas

As an ear from a seed of corn,
 As a brand plucked forth of a pyre,
 As a ray shed forth of the morn,
 For division of soul and disease,
 For a dart and a sting and a thorn?
 What ailed thee then to be born?

Was there not evil enough,
 Mother, and anguish on earth
 Born with a man at his birth,
 Wastes underfoot, and above
 Storm out of heaven, and dearth
 Shaken down from the shining thereof,
 Wrecks from afar overseas
 And peril of shallow and firth,
 And tears that spring and increase
 In the barren places of mirth,
 That thou, having wings as a dove,
 Being girt with desire for a girth,
 That thou must come after these,
 That thou must lay on him love?

Thou shouldst not so have been born:
 But death should have risen with
 thee,
 Mother, and visible fear,
 Grief, and the wringing of hands,
 And noise of many that mourn;
 The smitten bosom, the knee
 Bowed, and in each man's ear
 A cry as of perishing lands,
 A moan as of people in prison,
 A tumult of infinite griefs;

And thunder of storm on the
 sands,
 And wailing of wives on the shore;
 And under thee newly arisen
 Loud shoals and shipwrecking reefs,
 Fierce air and violent light;
 Sail rent and sundering oar,
 Darkness, and noises of night;
 Clashing of streams in the sea,
 Wave against wave as a sword,
 Clamor of currents, and foam;
 Rains making ruin on earth,
 Winds that wax ravenous and roam
 As wolves in a wolfish horde;
 Fruits growing faint in the tree,
 And blind things dead in their
 birth:
 Famine, and blighting of corn,
 When thy time was come to be
 born.

All these we know of; but thee
 Who shall discern or declare?
 In the uttermost ends of the sea
 The light of thine eyelids and hair,
 The light of thy bosom as fire
 Between the wheel of the sun
 And the flying flames of the air?
 Wilt thou turn thee not yet nor
 have pity,
 But abide with despair and desire
 And the crying of armies undone,
 Lamentation of one with another
 And breaking of city by city;
 The dividing of friend against friend,
 The severing of brother and
 brother;
 Wilt thou utterly bring to an end?
 Have mercy, mother!

For against all men from of old
 Thou hast set thine hand as a curse,
 And cast out gods from their places
 These things are spoken of thee.
 Strong kings and goodly with gold
 Thou hast found out arrows to pierce,
 And made their kingdoms and races
 As dust and surf of the sea.
 All these, overburdened with woes
 And with length of their days waxen
 weak,
 Thou slewest; and sentest more
 over

Upon Tyro an evil thing, Rent hair and a fetter and blows	The starless fold o' the stars, and making sweet
Making bloody the flower of the cheek, Though she lay by a god as a lover, Though fair, and the seed of a king.	The warm wan heights of the air, moon-trodden ways And breathless gates and extreme hills of heaven.
For of old, being full of thy fire, She endured not longer to wear On her bosom a saffron vest, On her shoulder an ashwood quiver;	Whom, having offered water and bloodless gifts, Flowers, and a golden circlet of pure hair, Next Artemis I bid be favorable And make this day all golden, hers and ours,
Being mixed and made one through desire With Enipeus, and all her hair Made moist with his mouth, and her breast Filled full of the foam of the river.	Gracious and good and white to the unblamed end. But thou, O well-beloved, of all my days Bid it be fruitful, and a crown for all, To bring forth leaves and bind round all my hair With perfect chaplets woven for thine of thee.
<i>Atalanta.</i> Sun, and clear light among green hills, and day Late risen and long sought after, and you just gods Whose hands divide anguish and recompense, But first the sun's white sister, a maid in heaven, On earth of all maids worshipped—hail, and hear, And witness with me if not without sign sent, Not without rule and reverence, I a maid Hallowed, and huntress holy as whom I serve, Here in your sight and eyeshot of these men Stand, girt as they toward hunting, and my shafts Drawn; wherefore all ye stand up on my side, If I be pure and all ye righteous gods, Lest one revile me, a woman, yet no wife, That bear a spear for spindle, and this bow strung For a web woven; and with pure lips salute Heaven, and the face of all the gods, and dawn Filling with maiden flames and maiden flowers	For not without the word of thy chaste mouth, For not without law given and clean command, Across the white straits of the running sea From Elis even to the Achelœian horn, I with clear winds came hither and gentle gods, Far off my father's house, and left uncheered Iasius, and uncheered the Arcadian hills And all their green-haired waters, and all woods Disconsolate, to hear no horn of mine Blown, and behold no flash of swift white feet. <i>Meleager.</i> For thy name's sake and awe toward thy chaste head, O holiest Atalanta, no man dares Praise thee, though fairer than whom all men praise, And godlike for thy grace of hallowed hair And holy habit of thine eyes, and feet That make the blown foam neither swift nor white Though the wind winnow and whirl it, yet we praise Gods, found because of thee adorable

And for thy sake praiseworthyest from
all men:
Thee therefore we praise also, thee as
these,
Pure, and a light lit at the hands of
gods.
Toxæus. How long will ye whet spears
with eloquence,
Fight, and kill beasts dry-handed with
sweet words?
Cease, or talk still and slay thy boars
at home.
Plexippus. Why, if she ride among
us for a man,
Sit thou for her and spin; a man grown girl
Is worth a woman weaponed; sit thou
here.
Meleager. Peace, and be wise; no
gods love idle speech.
Plexippus. Nor any man a man's
mouth woman-tongued.
Meleager. For my lips bite not sharp-
er than mine hands.
Plexippus. Nay, both bite soft, but
no whit softly mine.
Meleager. Keep thine hands clean;
they have time enough to stain.
Plexippus. For thine shall rest and
wax not red to-day.
Meleager. Have all thy will of words;
talk out thine heart.
Althæa. Refrain your lips, O brethren,
and my son,
Lest words turn snakes and bite you
uttering them.
Toxæus. Except she give her blood
before the gods,
What profit shall a maid be among
men?
Plexippus. Let her come crowned and
stretch her throat for a knife,
Bleat out her spirit, and die, and so shall
men
Through her too prosper and through
prosperous gods;
But nowise through her living; shall
she live
A flower-bud of the flower-bed, or sweet
fruit
For kisses and the honey-making mouth,
And play the shield for strong men and
the spear?

Then shall the heifer and her mate lock
horns,
And the bride overbear the groom, and
men
Gods; for no less division sunders these;
Since all things made are reasonable in
time,
But if one alter unseasonable are all.
But thou, O Zeus, hear me that I may
slay
This beast before thee and no man
halve with me
Nor woman, lest these mock thee,
though a god,
Who hast made men strong, and thou
being wise be held
Foolish; for wise is that thing which
endures.
Atalanta. Men, and the chosen of all
this people, and thou,
King, I beseech you, a little bear with
me.
For if my life be shameful that I live,
Let the gods witness, and their wrath;
but these
Cast no such word against me. Thou,
O mine,
O holy, O happy goddess, if I sin
Changing the words of women and the
works
For spears and strange men's faces,
hast not thou
One shaft of all thy sudden seven that
pierced
Seven through the bosom or shining
throat or side,
All couched about one mother's loosening
knees,
All holy born, engrafted of Tantalus?
But if toward any of you I am over-
bold
That take thus much upon me, let him
think
How I, for all my forest holiness,
Fame, and this armed and iron maiden-
hood,
Pay thus much also; I shall have no
man's love
Forever, and no face of children born
Or feeding lips upon me or fastening
eyes
Forever, nor being dead shall kings my
sons

Mourn me and bury, and tears on daughters' cheeks	For not the difference of the several flesh
Burn; but a cold and sacred life, but strange,	Being vile or noble or beautiful or base
But far from dances and the back-blowing torch,	Makes praiseworthy, but purer spirit and heart
Far off from flowers or any bed of man,	Higher than these meaner mouths and limbs, that feed,
Shall my life be forever: me the snows	Rise, rest, and are and are not; and for me,
That face the first o' the morning, and cold hills	What should I say? but by the gods of the world
Full of the land-wind and sea-travelling storms	And this my maiden body, by all oaths
And many a wandering wing of noisy nights	That bind the tongue of men and the evil will,
That know the thunder and hear the thickening wolves—	I am not mighty-minded, nor desire
Me the utmost pine and footless frost of woods	Crowns, nor the spoil of slain things nor the fame;
That talk with many winds and gods, the hours	Feed ye on these, eat and wax fat; cry out,
Re-risen, and white divisions of the dawn,	Laugh, having eaten, and leap without a lyre;
Springs thousand-tongued with the intermitting reed,	Sing, mix the wind with clamor, smile and shake
And streams that murmur of the mother snow—	Sonorous timbrels and tumultuous hair,
Me these allure, and know me; but no man	And fill the dance up with tempestuous feet.
Knows, and my goddess only. Lo now, see	For I will none; but having prayed my prayers
If one of all you these things vex at all.	And made thank-offering for prosperities,
Would God that any of you had all the praise	I shall go hence, and no man see me more.
And I no manner of memory when I die,	What thing is this for you to shout me down,
So might I show before her perfect eyes	What, for a man to grudge me this my life
Pure, whom I follow, a maiden to my death.	As it were envious of all yours, and I
But for the rest let all have all they will;	A thief of reputations? nay, for now,
For is it a grief to you that I have part,	If there be any highest in heaven, a god
Being woman merely, in your male might and deeds	Above all thrones and thunders of the gods
Done by main strength? yet in my body is throned	Throned, and the wheel of the world roll under him,
As great a heart, and in my spirit, O men,	Judge he between me and all of you, and see
I have not less of godlike. Evil it were	If I transgress at all: but ye, refrain
That one a coward should mix with you, one hand	Transgressing hands and reainless mouths, and keep
Fearful, one eye abase itself; and these	Silence, lest by much foam of violent words
Well might ye hate and well revile, not me.	And proper poison of your lips ye die.
	<i>Æneis.</i> O flower of Tegea, maiden, sweetest foot

And holiest head of women, have good cheer

Of thy good words: but ye, depart with her

* In peace and reverence, each with blameless eye

Following his fate; exalt your hands and hearts,

Strike, cease not, arrow on arrow and wound on wound,

And go with gods, and with the gods return.

Chorus. Who hath given man speech? or who hath set therein

A thorn for peril and a snare for sin?

For in the word his life is and his breath,

And in the word his death,

That madness and the infatuate heart may breed

From the word's womb the deed

And life bring one thing forth ere all pass by,

Even one thing which is ours yet cannot die, —

Death. Hast thou seen him ever anywhere,

Time's twin-born brother, imperishable as he

Is perishable and plaintive, clothed with care

And mutable as sand,

But death is strong and full of blood and fair

And perdurable and like a lord of land?

Nay, time thou seest not, death thou wilt not see

Till life's right hand be loosened from thine hand,

And thy life-days from thee.

For the gods very subtly fashion Madness with sadness upon earth:

Not knowing in any wise compassion, Nor holding pity of any worth;

And many things they have given and taken,

And wrought and ruined many things; The firm land have they loosed and shaken,

And sealed the sea with all her springs;

They have wearied time with heavy burdens,

And vexed the lips of life with breath: Set men to labor and given them guerdons,

Death, and great darkness after death: Put moans into the bridal measure

And on the bridal wools a stain; And circled pain about with pleasure,

And girdled pleasure about with pain; And strewed one marriage-bed with tears and fire

For extreme loathing and supreme desire.

What shall be done with all these tears of ours?

Shall they make water-springs in the fair heaven

To bathe the brows of morning? or like flowers

Be shed and shine before the starriest hours,

Or made the raiment of the weeping Seven?

Or rather, O our masters, shall they be Food for the famine of the grievous sea,

A great well-head of lamentation Satiating the sad gods? or fall and flow

Among the years and seasons to and fro,

And wash their feet with tribulation

And fill them full with grieving ere they go?

Alas, our lords, and yet alas again! Seeing all your iron heaven is gilt as gold

But all we smite thereat in vain; Smite the gates barred with groanings manifold,

But all the floors are paven with our pain.

Yea, and with weariness of lips and eyes,

With breaking of the bosom, and with sighs,

We labor, and are clad and fed with grief

And filled with days we would not faint behold

And nights we would not hear of; we wax old,

All we wax old and wither like a leaf. ✓

We are outcast, strayed between bright
sun and moon;
Our light and darkness are as leaves
of flowers,
Black flowers and white, that perish;
and the noon
As midnight, and the night as day-
light hours.
A little fruit a little while is ours,
And the worm finds it soon.

But up in heaven the high gods one by
one

Lay hands upon the draught that
quickeneth,
Fulfilled with all tears shed and all
things done,
And stir with soft imperishable breath
The bubbling bitterness of life and
death,

And hold it to our lips, and laugh; but
they

Preserve their lips from tasting night
or day,

Lest they too change and sleep, the
fates that spun,

The lips that made us and the hands
that slay;

Lest all these change, and heaven
bow down to none,

Change and be subject to the secular
sway

And terrene revolution of the sun.
Therefore they thrust it from them,
putting time away.

I would the wine of time, made sharp
and sweet

With multitudinous days and nights
and tears

And many mixing savors of strange
years,

Were no more trodden of them under
feet,

Cast out and spilt about their holy
places:

That life were given them as a fruit to eat
And death to drink as water; that the
light

Might ebb, drawn backward from their
eyes, and night

Hide for one hour the imperishable
faces.

That they might rise up sad in heaven,
and know

Sorrow and sleep, one paler than young
snow,

One cold as blight of dew and ruinous
rain;

Rise up and rest and suffer a little, and
be

Awhile as all things born with us and
we,

And grieve as men, and like slain
men be slain.

For now we know not of them; but
one saith

The gods are gracious, praising God;
and one,

When hast thou seen? or hast thou felt
his breath

Touch, nor consume thine eyelids as
the sun,

Nor fill thee to the lips with fiery death?
None hath beheld him, none

Seen above other gods and shapes of
things,

Swift without feet and flying without
wings,

Intolerable, not clad with death or life,
Insatiable, not known of night or

day,
The lord of love and loathing and of
strife,

Who gives a star, and takes a sun
away;

Who shapes the soul, and makes her a
barren wife

To the earthly body and grievous
growth of clay;

Who turns the large limbs to a little
flame,

And binds the great sea with a little
sand;

Who makes desire, and slays desire
with shame;

Who shakes the heaven as ashes in
his hand;

Who, seeing the light and shadow for
the same,

Bids day waste night as fire devours
a brand,

Smites without sword, and scourges
without rod,—

The supreme evil, God.

Yea, with thine hate, O God, thou hast
covered us,

One saith, and hidden our eyes away
from sight,

And made us transitory and hazardous,
Light things and slight;

Yet have men praised thee, saying, He
nath made man thus,

And he doeth right.

Thou hast kissed us, and hast smitten;
thou hast laid

Upon us with thy left hand life, and said,
Live: and again thou hast said, Yield
up your breath,

And with thy right hand laid upon us
death.

Thou hast sent us sleep, and stricken
sleep with dreams,

Saying, Joy is not, but love of joy
shall be;

Thou hast made sweet springs for all
the pleasant streams,

In the end thou hast made them bitter
with the sea.

Thou hast fed one rose with dust of
many men;

Thou hast married one face with fire
of many tears;

Thou hast taken love, and given us
sorrow again;

With pain thou hast filled us full to
the eyes and ears.

Therefore because thou art strong, our
father, and we

Feeble; and thou art against us, and
thine hand

Constrains us in the shallows of the sea
And breaks us at the limits of the
land;

Because thou hast bent thy lightnings
as a bow,

And loosed the hours like arrows;
and let fall

Sins and wild words and many a winged
woe

And wars among us, and one end of
all;

Because thou hast made the thunder,
and thy feet

Are as a rushing water when the skies
Break, but thy face as an exceeding heat,

And flames of fire the eyelids of
thine eyes;

Because thou art over all who are over
us;

Because thy name is life, and our
name death;

Because thou art cruel, and men are
piteous,

And our hands labor, and thine hand
scattereth:

Lo, with hearts rent and knees made
tremulous,

Lo, with ephemeral lips and casual
breath,

At least we witness of thee ere we
die

That these things are not otherwise,
but thus;

That each man in his heart sigheth,
and saith,

That all men even as I,

All we are against thee, against thee,
O God most high.

But ye, keep ye on earth

Your lips from over-speech,

Loud words and longing are so little
worth;

And the end is hard to reach.

For silence after grievous things is
good,

And reverence, and the fear that
makes men whole,

And shame, and righteous governance
of blood,

And lordship of the soul.

But from sharp words and wits men
pluck no fruit,

And gathering thorns they shake the
tree at root;

For words divide and rend;

But silence is most noble till the end.

Althea. I heard within the house a
cry of news,

And came forth eastward hither, where
the dawn

Cheers first these warder gods that face
the sun,

And next our eyes unrisen; for unaware
Came clashes of swift hoofs and tram-

pling feet,

And through the windy pillared corri-
dor

Light sharper than the frequent flames
of day

That daily fill it from the fiery dawn;

Gleams, and a thunder of people that
cried out,
And dust and hurrying horsemen; lo
their chief,
That rode with Ceneus rein by rein,
returned.
What cheer, O herald of my lord the
king?
Herald. Lady, good cheer and great:
the boar is slain.
Chorus. Praised be all gods that look
toward Calydon.
Althea. Good news and brief; but
by whose happier hand?
Herald. A maiden's and a prophet's
and thy son's.
Althea. Well fare the spear that
severed him and life.
Herald. Thine own, and not an alien,
hast thou blest.
Althea. Twice be thou too for my
sake blest and his.
Herald. At the king's word I rode
afoam for thine.
Althea. Thou sayest he tarrieth till
they bring the spoil?
Herald. Hard by the quarry, where
they breathe, O queen.
Althea. Speak thou their chance;
but some bring flowers, and
crown
These gods and all the lintel, and shed
wine,
Fetch sacrifice and slay; for Heaven is
good.
Herald. Some furlongs northward
where the brakes begin,
West of that narrowing range of war-
rior hills
Whose brooks have bled with battle
when thy son
Smote Acarnania, there all they made
halt,
And with keen eye took note of spear
and hound,
Rovally ranked: Laertes island-born,
The young Gerenian Nestor, Panopeus,
And Cepheus and Ancæus, mightiest
thewed,
Arcadians; next, and evil-eyed of these,
Arcadian Atalanta, with twin hounds
Lengthening the leash, and under nose
and brow
Glittering with lipless tooth and fire-
swift eye;
But from her white braced shoulder the
plumed shafts
Rang, and the bow shone from her
side; next her
Meleager, like a sun in spring that
strikes
Branch into leaf and bloom into the
world,
A glory among men meaner; Iphicles,
And following him that slew the biform
bull
Pirithous, and divine Eurytion,
And, bride-bound to the gods, Æacides;
Then Telamon his brother, and Argive-
born
The seer and sayer of visions and of
truth,
Amphiaraus; and a fourfold strength,
Thine, even thy mother's and thy sis-
ter's sons;
And recent from the roar of foreign
foam
Jason, and Dryas twin-begot with war,
A blossom of bright battle, sword and
man
Shining; and Idas; and the keenest
eye
Of Lynceus; and Admetus twice-es-
poused;
And Hippasus and Hyleus, great in
heart.
These having halted bade blow horns,
and rode
Through woods and waste lands cleft
by stormy streams,
Past yew-trees and the heavy hair of
pines,
And where the dew is thickest under
oaks,
This way and that; but questing up
and down
They saw no trail, nor scented; and
one said, —
Plexippus, — Help, or help not, Arte-
mis,
And we will flay thy boar-skin with
male hands;
But saying, he ceased and said not that
he would,
Seeing where the green ooze of a sun-
struck marsh

Shook with a thousand reeds untunable,
 And in their moist and multitudinous
 flower
 Slept no soft sleep, with violent visions
 fed,
 The blind bulk of the immeasurable
 beast.
 And seeing, he shuddered with sharp
 lust of praise
 Through all his limbs, and launched a
 double dart,
 And missed; for much desire divided
 him,
 Too hot of spirit and feebler than his
 will,
 That his hand failed, though fervent;
 and the shaft,
 Sundering the rushes, in a tamarisk stem
 Shook, and stuck fast. Then all abode
 save one,
 The Arcadian Atalanta: from her side
 Sprang her hounds, laboring at the
 leash, and slipped,
 And plashed ear-deep with plunging
 feet; but she,
 Saying, Speed it as I send it for thy
 sake,
 Goddess, drew bow and loosed; the
 sudden string
 Rang, and sprang inward, and the
 waterish air
 Hissed, and the moist plumes of the
 songless reeds
 Moved as a wave which the wind moves
 no more.
 But the boar heaved half out of ooze
 and slime
 His tense flank trembling round the
 barbed wound,
 Hateful; and fiery with invasive eyes
 And bristling with intolerable hair
 Plunged, and the hounds clung, and
 green flowers and white
 Reddened and broke all round them
 where they came.
 And charging with sheer tusk he drove,
 and smote
 Hyleus; and sharp death caught his
 sudden soul,
 And violent sleep shed night upon his
 eyes.
 Then Peleus, with strong strain of hand
 and heart,

Shot; but the sidelong arrow slid, and
 slew
 His comrade born and loving country-
 man,
 Under the left arm smitten, as he no
 less
 Poised a like arrow; and bright blood
 brake afoam,
 And falling, and weighed back by clam-
 orous arms,
 Sharp rang the dead limbs of Eurytion.
 Then one shot happier, the Cadmean
 seer,
 Amphiaraus; for his sacred shaft
 Pierced the red circlet of one ravening
 eye
 Beneath the brute brows of the san-
 guine boar,
 Now bloodier from one slain; but he
 so galled
 Sprang straight, and rearing cried no
 lesser cry
 Than thunder and the roar of winter-
 ing streams
 That mix their own foam with the yel-
 lower sea;
 And as a tower that falls by fire in
 fight
 With ruin of walls and all its archery,
 And breaks the iron flower of war
 beneath,
 Crushing charred limbs and molten
 arms of men;
 So through crushed branches and the
 reddening brake
 Clamored and crashed the fervor of
 his feet,
 And trampled, springing sideways from
 the tusk,
 Too tardy a moving mould of heavy
 strength,
 Ancæus; and as flakes of weak-winged
 snow
 Break, all the hard thews of his heav-
 ing limbs
 Broke, and rent flesh fell every way,
 and blood
 Flew, and fierce fragments of no more
 a man.
 Then all the heroes drew sharp breath,
 and gazed,
 And smote not; but Meleager, but thy
 son,

Right in the wild way of the coming
 curse
 Rock-rooted, fair with fierce and fast-
 ened lips,
 Clear eyes, and springing muscle and
 shortening limb—
 With chin aslant indrawn to a tighten-
 ing throat,
 Grave, and with gathered sinews, like
 a god,—
 Aimed on the left side his well-handled
 spear
 Grasped where the ash was knottiest
 hewn, and smote,
 And with no missile wound, the mon-
 strous boar
 Right in the hairiest hollow of his hide
 Under the last rib, sheer through bulk
 and bone,
 Deep in; and deeply smitten, and to
 death,
 The heavy horror with his hanging
 shafts
 Leapt, and fell furiously, and from
 raging lips
 Foamed out the latest wrath of all his
 life.
 And all they praised the gods with
 mightier heart,
 Zeus and all gods, but chieftiest Artemis,
 Seeing; but Meleager bade whet knives
 and flay,
 Strip and stretch out the splendour of
 the spoil;
 And hot and horrid from the work all
 these
 Sat, and drew breath, and drank and
 made great cheer,
 And washed the hard sweat off their
 calmer brows.
 For much sweet grass grew higher than
 grew the reed,
 And good for slumber, and every holier
 herb,
 Narcissus, and the low-lying melilote,
 And all of goodliest blade and bloom
 that springs
 Where, hid by heavier hyacinth, violet
 buds
 Blossom and burn; and fire of yellower
 flowers
 And light of crescent lilies, and such
 leaves

As fear the faun's and know the
 dryad's foot;
 Olive and ivy and poplar dedicate,
 And many a wellspring over-watched of
 these.
 There now they rest; but me the king
 bade bear
 Good tidings to rejoice this town and
 thee.
 Wherefore be glad, and all ye give
 much thanks,
 For fallen is all the trouble of Calydon.
Althæa. Laud ye the gods; for this
 they have given is good,
 And what shall be, they hide until their
 time.
 Much good and somewhat grievous hast
 thou said,
 And either well; but let all sad things
 be,
 Till all have made before the prosperous
 gods
 Burnt-offering, and poured out the floral
 wine.
 Look fair, O gods, and favorable; for
 we
 Praise you with no false heart or flatter-
 ing mouth,
 Being merciful, but with pure souls and
 prayer.
Herald. Thou hast prayed well; for
 whoso fears not these,
 But once being prosperous waxes huge
 of heart,
 Him shall some new thing unaware
 destroy.
Chorus. O that I now, I too were
 By deep wells and water-floods,
 Streams of ancient hills, and where
 All the wan green places bear
 Blossoms cleaving to the sod,
 Fruitless fruit, and grasses fair,
 Or such darkest ivy-buds
 As divide thy yellow hair,
 Bacchus, and their leaves that nod
 Round thy fawnskin brush the bare
 Snow-soft shoulders of a god;
 There the year is sweet, and there
 Earth is full of secret springs,
 And the fervent rose-cheeked hours,
 Those that marry dawn and noon.
 There are sunless, there look pale
 In dim leaves and hidden air,

Pale as grass or latter flowers
 Or the wild vine's wan wet rings
 Full of dew beneath the moon,
 And all day the nightingale
 Sleeps, and all night sings;
 There in cold remote recesses
 That nor alien eyes assail,
 Feet, nor imminence of wings,
 Nor a wind nor any tune,
 Thou, O queen and holiest,
 Flower the whitest of all things,
 With reluctant lengthening tresses
 And with sudden splendid breast
 Save of maidens un beholden,
 There art wont to enter, there
 Thy divine swift limbs and golden
 Maiden growth of unbound hair,
 Bathed in waters white,
 Shine, and many a maid's by thee
 In moist woodland or the hilly
 Flowerless brakes where wells abound
 Out of all men's sight;
 Or in lower pools that see
 All their marges clothed all round
 With the innumerable lily,
 Whence the golden-girdled bee
 Flits through flowering rush to fret
 White or duskier violet,
 Fair as those that in far years
 With their buds left luminous
 And their little leaves made wet
 From the warmer dew of tears,
 Mother's tears in extreme need,
 Hid the limbs of Iamus,
 Of thy brother's seed;
 For his heart was piteous
 Toward him, even as thine heart now
 Pitiful toward us;
 Thine, O goddess, turning hither
 A benignant blameless brow;
 Seeing enough of evil done
 And lives withered as leaves wither
 In the blasting of the sun;
 Seeing enough of hunters dead,
 Ruin enough of all our year,
 Herds and harvests slain and shed,
 Herdsmen stricken many an one,
 Fruits and flocks consumed together,
 And great length of deadly days.
 Yet with reverent lips and fear
 Turn we toward thee, turn and praise
 For this lightening of clear weather
 And prosperities begun.

For not seldom, when all air
 As bright water without breath
 Shines, and when men fear not, fate
 Without thunder unaware
 Breaks, and brings down death.
 Joy with grief ye great gods give,
 Good with bad, and overbear
 All the pride of us that live,
 All the high estate,
 As ye long since overbore,
 As in old time long before,
 Many a strong man and a great,
 All that were.
 But do thou, sweet, otherwise,
 Having heed of all our prayer,
 Taking note of all our sighs;
 We beseech thee by thy light,
 By thy bow, and thy sweet eyes,
 And the kingdom of the night,
 Be thou favorable and fair;
 By thine arrows and thy might
 And Orion overthrown;
 By the maiden thy delight,
 By the indissoluble zone
 And the sacred hair.

Messenger. Maidens, if ye will sing
 now, shift your song,
 Bow down, cry, wail for pity; is this a time
 For singing? nay, for strewing of dust
 and ash,
 Rent raiment, and for bruising of the
 breast.

Chorus. What new thing wolf-like
 lurks behind thy words?
 What snake's tongue in thy lips? what
 fire in the eyes?

Messenger. Bring me before the
 queen, and I will speak.

Chorus. Lo, she comes forth as from
 thank-offering made.

Messenger. A barren offering for a
 bitter gift.

Althaa. What are these borne on
 branches, and the face
 Covered? no mean men living, but now
 slain
 Such honor have they, if any dwell
 with death.

Messenger. Queen, thy twain brethren
 and thy mother's sons.

Althaa. Lay down your dead till I
 behold their blood
 If it be mine indeed, and I will weep.

- Messenger.* Weep if thou wilt, for these men shall no more.
- Althea.* O brethren, O my father's sons, of me Well loved and well reputed, I should weep Tears dearer than the dear blood drawn from you But that I know you not uncomforted, Sleeping no shameful sleep, however slain, For my sons surely hath avenged you dead.
- Messenger.* Nay, should thine own seed slay himself, O queen?
- Althea.* Thy double word brings forth a double death.
- Messenger.* Know this then singly, by one hand they fell.
- Althea.* What mutterest thou with thine ambiguous mouth?
- Messenger.* Slain by thy son's hand: is that saying so hard?
- Althea.* Our time is come upon us: it is here.
- Chorus.* O miserable, and spoiled at thine own hand!
- Althea.* Wert thou not called Meleager from this womb?
- Chorus.* A grievous huntsman hath it bred to thee.
- Althea.* Wert thou born fire, and shalt thou not devour?
- Chorus.* The fire thou madest, will it consume even thee?
- Althea.* My dreams are fallen upon me: burn thou too.
- Chorus.* Not without God are visions born and die.
- Althea.* The gods are many about me; I am one.
- Chorus.* She groans as men wrestling with heavier gods.
- Althea.* They rend me, they divide me, they destroy.
- Chorus.* Or one laboring in travail of strange births.
- Althea.* They are strong, they are strong: I am broken, and these prevail.
- Chorus.* The god is great against her: she will die.
- Althea.* Yea, but not now; for my heart too is great.
- I would I were not here in sight of the sun.
- But thou, speak all thou sawest, and I will die.
- Messenger.* O queen, for queenlike hast thou borne thyself, A little word may hold so great mischance.
- For, in division of the sanguine spoil, These men thy brethren wrangling bade yield up The boar's head and the horror of the hide, That this might stand a wonder in Calydon, Hallowed; and some drew toward them; but thy son, With great hands grasping all that weight of hair, Cast down the dead heap clanging and collapsed At female feet, saying, This thy spoil, not mine, Maiden, thine own hand for thyself hath reaped, And all this praise God gives thee: she thereat Laughed, as when dawn touches the sacred night The sky sees laugh and redden and divide Dim lips and eyelids virgin of the sun, Hers, and the warm slow breasts of morning heave, Fruitful, and flushed with flame from lamp-lit hours, And maiden undulation of clear hair Color the clouds; so laughed she from pure heart Lit with a low blush to the braided hair, And rose-colored and cold like very dawn, Golden and godlike, chastely with chaste lips, A faint grave laugh; and all they held their peace, And she passed by them. Then one cried, Lo now, Shall not the Arcadian shoot out lips at us, Saying all we were despoiled by this one girl?

And all they rode against her violently,
 And cast the fresh crown from her hair,
 and now
 They had rent her spoil away, dishonor-
 ing her,
 Save that Meleager, as a tame lion
 chafed,
 Bore on them, broke them, and as fire
 cleaves wood
 So clove and drove them, smitten in
 twain; but she
 Smote not nor heaved up hand; and
 this man first,
 Plexippus, crying out, This for love's
 sake, sweet,
 Drove at Meleager, who with spear
 straightening
 Pierced his cheek through; then Toxeus
 made for him,
 Dumb, but his spear spake; vain and
 violent words,
 Fruitless: for him too, stricken through
 both sides
 The earth felt falling, and his horse's
 foam
 Blanched thy son's face, his slayer.
 And these being slain,
 None moved nor spake; but Æneus
 bade bear hence
 These made of heaven infatuate in
 their deaths,
 Foolish; for these would baffle fate,
 and fell.
 And they passed on, and all men
 honored her,
 Being honorable, as one revered of
 heaven.
Althæa. What say you, women? is
 all this not well done?
Chorus. No man doth well but God
 hath part in him.
Althæa. But no part here; for these
 my brethren born
 Ye have no part in, these ye know not of
 As I that was their sister, a sacrifice
 Slain in their slaying. I would I had
 died for these;
 For this man dead walked with me,
 child by child,
 And made a weak staff for my feeblèr
 feet
 With his own tender wrist and hand,
 and held

And led me softly, and showed me gold
 and steel
 And shining shapes of mirror and
 bright crown,
 And all things fair; and threw light
 spears, and brought
 Young hounds to huddle at my feet,
 and thrust
 Tame heads against my little maiden
 breasts,
 And please me with great eyes; and
 those days went,
 And these are bitter, and I a barren
 queen
 And sister miserable, a grievous thing,
 And mother of many curses; and she
 too,
 My sister Leda, sitting overseas
 With fair fruits round her, and her
 faultless lord,
 Shall curse me, saying, A sorrow and
 not a son,
 Sister, thou barest, even a burning fire,
 A brand consuming thine own soul and
 me.
 But ye now, sons of Thestius, make
 good cheer,
 For ye shall have such wood to funeral
 fire
 As no king hath; and flame that once
 burnt down
 Oil shall not quicken, or breath relume,
 or wine
 Refresh again; much costlier than fine
 gold,
 And more than many lives of wander-
 ing men.
Chorus. O queen, thou hast yet with
 thee love-worthy things,—
 Thine husband, and the great strength
 of thy son.
Althæa. Who shall get brothers for
 me while I live?
 Who bear them? who bring forth in
 lieu of these?
 Are not our fathers and our brethren
 one,
 And no man like them? are not mine
 here slain?
 Have we not hung together, he and I,
 Flowerwise feeding as the feeding bees,
 With mother-milk for honey? and this
 man too,

Dead, with my son's spear thrust between his sides,
Hath he not seen us, later born than he,
Laugh with lips filled, and laughed again for love?

There were no sons then in the world,
Nor spears,
Nor deadly births of women; but the gods

Allowed us, and our days were clear of these.

I would I had died unwedded, and brought forth

No swords to vex the world; for these that spake

Sweet words long since, and loved me, will not speak

Nor love nor look upon me; and all my life

I shall not bear nor see them living men.

But I too living, how shall I now live? What life shall this be with my son, to know

What hath been, and desire what will not be.

I look for dead eyes, and listen for dead lips

And kiss mine own heart with remembrance of them

And with those eyes that see their slaver alive

Weep, and think that they are still alive

How shall I bear the burden of their lives

Fake smiles and the hollow of their eyes

And the cold touch of their hands on mine

What shall I do, when they are dead, to see their faces

And to remember them, as they were once alive

And to remember them, as they were once alive

And to remember them, as they were once alive

And to remember them, as they were once alive

And to remember them, as they were once alive

And to remember them, as they were once alive

And I not heed at all? and those blind things

Fall off from life for love's sake, and I live?

Surely some death is better than some life,

Better one death for him and these and me.

For, if the gods had slain them, it may be

I had endured it; if they had fallen by war,

Or by the nets and knives of privy death

And by hired hands while sleeping, this thing too

I had set my soul to suffer; or this hunt,

Had this despatched them, under tusk or tooth

Torn, sanguine, trodden, broken; for all deaths ✓

Or honourable, or with facile feet avenged

And hands of swift gods following, all save this,

Are bearable. But not for their sweet land

Fighting, but not a sacrifice, to these

Death: for I had not then shed all mine heart

Out at mine eyes: then either with good sword,

Or crown with flowers their fire, and on their heads

Had crown'd and over them a song, and song

Had crown'd and over them a song, and song

Had crown'd and over them a song, and song

Had crown'd and over them a song, and song

Had crown'd and over them a song, and song

Had crown'd and over them a song, and song

Had crown'd and over them a song, and song

Had crown'd and over them a song, and song

Had crown'd and over them a song, and song

Touch these returning red and not from war,
 These fatal from the vintage of men's veins,
 Dead men my brethren? how shall these wash off
 No festal stains of undelightful wine,
 How mix the blood, my blood on them,
 Holding mine hand? or how shall I say, Son,
 That am no sister? But by night and day
 Shall we not sit and hate each other, and think
 Things hate-worthy? not live with shamefast eyes,
 Browbeaten, treading soft with fearful feet,
 Each unupbraided, each without rebuke
 Convicted, and without a word reviled
 Each of another? and I shall let thee live
 And see thee strong, and hear men for thy sake
 Praise me, but these thou wouldest not let live
 No man shall praise forever? these shall lie
 Dead, unbeloved, unholpen, all through thee?
 Sweet were they toward me living, and mine heart
 Desired them, but was then well satisfied,
 That now is as men hungered; and these dead
 I shall want always to the day I die.
 For all things else and all men may renew;
 Yea, son for son the gods may give and take,
 But never a brother or sister any more.
Chorus. Nay, for the son lies close about thine heart,
 Full of thy milk, warm from thy womb, and drains
 Life, and the blood of life, and all thy fruit,
 Eats thee and drinks thee as who breaks bread and eats,
 Treads wine and drinks, thyself, a sect of thee;

And if he feed not, shall not thy flesh faint?
 Or drink not, are not thy lips dead for thirst?
 This thing moves more than all things, even thy son,
 That thou cleave to him; and he shall honor thee,
 Thy womb that bare him and the breasts he knew,
 Reverencing most for thy sake all his gods.
Althæa. But these the gods too gave me; and these my son,
 Not reverencing his gods, nor mine own heart,
 Nor the old sweet years, nor all venerable things,
 But cruel, and in his ravin like a beast,
 Hath taken away to slay them: yea, and she,
 She the strange woman, she the flower, the sword,
 Red from spilt blood, a mortal flower to men,
 Adorable, detestable, — even she
 Saw with strange eyes, and with strange lips rejoiced,
 Seeing these mine own slain of mine own, and me
 Made miserable above all miseries made,
 A grief among all women in the world,
 A name to be washed out with all men's tears.
Chorus. Strengthen thy spirit: is this not also a god,
 Chance, and the wheel of all necessities?
 Hard things have fallen upon us from harsh gods,
 Whom, lest worse hap, rebuke we not for these.
Althæa. My spirit is strong against itself, and I
 For these things' sake cry out on mine own soul,
 That it endures outrage, and dolorous days,
 And life, and this inexpiable impotence.
 Weak am I, weak and shameful; my breath drawn

<p>Shames me, and monstrous things and violent gods. What shall atone? what heal me? what bring back Strength to the foot, light to the face? what herb Assuage me? what restore me? what release? What strange thing eaten or drunken, O great gods, Make me as you, or as the beasts that feed, Slay and divide and cherish their own hearts? For these ye show us; and we less than these Have not wherewith to live as all these things Which all their lives fare after their own kind As who doth well rejoicing; but we ill, Weeping or laughing, we whom eyesight fails, Knowledge and light of face and perfect heart, And hands we lack, and wit; and all our days Sin, and have hunger, and die infatuated. For madness have ye given us, and not health, And sins whereof we know not; and for these Death, and sudden destruction, unaware. What shall we say now? what thing comes of us? <i>Chorus.</i> Alas! for all this all men undergo. <i>Althea.</i> Wherefore I will not that these twain, O gods, Die as a dog dies, eaten of creeping things, Abominable, a loathing; but though dead Shall they have honor and such funeral flame As strews men's ashes in their enemies' face, And blinds their eyes who hate them: lest men say, "Lo how they lie, and living had great kin;</p>	<p>And none of these hath pity of them, and none Regards them lying, and none is wrong at heart, None moved in spirit for them, naked and slain, Abhorred, abased, and no tears comfort them;" And in the dark this grieve Eurythemis, Hearing how these her sons come down to her Unburied, unavenged, as kinless men, And had a queen their sister. That were shame Worse than this grief. Yet how to atone at all I know not; seeing the love of my born son, A new-made mother's new-born love, that grows From the soft child to the strong man, now soft, Now strong as either, and still one sole same love, Strives with me, no light thing to strive withal: This love is deep, and natural to man's blood, And ineffaceable with many tears. Yet shall not these rebuke me, though I die, Nor she in that waste world with all her dead, My mother, among the pale flocks fallen as leaves, Folds of dead people, and alien from the sun; Nor lack some bitter comfort, some poor praise, Being queen, to have borne her daughter like a queen Righteous; and though mine own fire burn me too, She shall have honor, and these her sons, though dead. But all the gods will, all they do, and we Not all we would, yet somewhat; and one choice We have, to live and do just deeds and die. <i>Chorus.</i> Terrible words she communes with, and turns</p>
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Swift fiery eyes in doubt against herself,
And murmurs as who talks in dreams
with death.

Althæa. For the unjust also dieth,
and him all men
Hate, and himself abhors the unright-
eousness,
And seeth his own dishonor intoler-
able.

But I being just, doing right upon my-
self,
Slay mine own soul, and no man born
shames me.

For none constrains nor shall rebuke,
being done,
What none compelled me doing; thus
these things fare.

Ah, ah! that such things should so
fare; ah me!

That I am found to do them and endure,
Chosen and constrained to choose, and
bear myself

Mine own wound through mine own
flesh to the heart

Violently stricken, a spoiler and a spoil,
A ruin ruinous, fallen on mine own
son.

Ah, ah! for me too as for these; alas!
For that is done that shall be, and mine
hand

Full of the deed, and full of blood mine
eyes,

That shall see never nor touch any thing
Save blood unstanch'd and fire un-
quenchable.

Chorus. What wilt thou do? what
ails thee? for the house
Shakes ruinously: wilt thou bring fire
for it?

Althæa. Fire in the roofs, and on the
lintels fire.

Lo ye, who stand and weave, between
the doors,

There; and blood drips from hand and
thread, and stains

Threshold and raiment and me passing
in

Flecked with the sudden sanguine drops
of death.

Chorus. Alas that time is stronger
than strong men,
Fate than all gods! and these are fallen
on us.

Althæa. A little since, and I was glad;
and now

I never shall be glad or sad again.

Chorus. Between two joys a grief
grows unaware.

Althæa. A little while, and I shall
laugh; and then

I shall weep never, and laugh not any
more.

Chorus. What shall be said? for
words are thorns to grief.

Withhold thyself a little, and fear the
gods.

Althæa. Fear died when these were
slain; and I am as dead,
And fear is of the living; these fear
none.

Chorus. Have pity upon all people
for their sake.

Althæa. It is done now: shall I put
back my day?

Chorus. An end is come, an end:
this is of God.

Althæa. I am fire, and burn myself:
keep clear of fire.

Chorus. The house is broken, is
broken; it shall not stand.

Althæa. Woe, woe for him that
breaketh; and a rod

Smote it of old, and now the axe is
here.

Chorus. Not as with sundering of the
earth,

Nor as with cleaving of the sea,
Nor fierce foreshadowings of a

birth,
Nor flying dreams of death to

be,
Nor loosening of the large world's

girth,
And quickening of the body of night,

And sound of thunder in men's
ears,

And fire of lightning in men's sight,
Fate, mother of desires and fears,

Bore unto men the law of tears.
But sudden, an unfathered lame,

And broken out of night, she
shone, —

She, without body, without name,
In days forgotten and foregone;

And heaven rang round her as she
came,

Like smitten cymbals, and lay bare;
 Clouds and great stars, thunders
 and snows,
 The blue sad fields and folds of air,
 The life that breathes, the life that
 grows,
 All wind, all fire, that burns or
 blows,
 Even all these knew her: for she is
 great,
 The daughter of doom, the mother
 of death,
 The sister of sorrow; a lifelong
 weight
 That no man's finger lighteneth,
 Nor any god can lighten fate;
 A landmark seen across the way
 Where one race treads as the other
 trod;
 An evil sceptre, an evil stay,
 Wrought for a staff, wrought for a
 rod,
 The bitter jealousy of God.

For death is deep as the sea,
 And fate as the waves thereof.
 Shall the waves take pity on thee,
 Or the south-wind offer thee love?
 Wilt thou take the night for thy day,
 Or the darkness for light on thy way,
 Till thou say in thine heart
 Enough?
 Behold, thou art over fair, thou art over
 wise;
 The sweetness of spring in thine hair,
 and the light in thine eyes.
 The light of the spring in thine eyes,
 and the sound in thine ears;
 Yet thine heart shall wax heavy with
 sighs, and thine eyelids with
 tears.
 Wilt thou cover thine hair with gold,
 and with silver thy feet?
 Hast thou taken the purple to fold thee,
 and made thy mouth sweet?
 Behold, when thy face is made bare, he
 that loved thee shall hate;
 Thy face shall be no more fair at the
 fall of thy fate.
 For thy life shall fall as a leaf, and be
 shed as the rain;
 And the veil of thine head shall be
 grief; and the crown shall be pain.

Althæa. Ho, ye that wail, and ye that
 sing, make way
 Till I be come among you. Hide your
 tears,
 Ye little weepers, and your laughing
 lips,
 Ye laughers, for a little; lo mine eyes
 That outweep heaven at rainiest, and
 my mouth
 That laughs as gods laugh at us!
 Fate's are we,
 Yet fate is ours a breathing-space; yea,
 mine,
 Fate is made mine forever; he is my
 son,
 My bedfellow, my brother. You strong
 gods,
 Give place unto me; I am as any of
 you,
 To give life and to take life. Thou,
 old earth,
 That hast made man and unmade; thou
 whose mouth
 Looks red from the eaten fruits of
 thine own womb;
 Behold me with what lips upon what
 food
 I feed and fill my body; even with flesh
 Made of my body. Lo, the fire I lit
 I burn with fire to quench it; yea, with
 flame
 I burn up even the dust and ash there-
 of.

Chorus. Woman, what fire is this
 thou burnest with?

Althæa. Yea to the bone, yea to the
 blood and all.

Chorus. For this thy face and ha'r
 are as one fire.

Althæa. A tongue that licks and beats
 upon the dust.

Chorus. And in thine eyes are hollow
 light and heat.

Althæa. Of flame not fed with hand
 or frankincense.

Chorus. I fear thee for the trembling
 of thine eyes.

Althæa. Neither with love they trem-
 ble, nor for fear.

Chorus. And thy mouth shudder'ng
 like a shot bird.

Althæa. Not as the bride's mouth
 when man kisses it.

<p><i>Chorus.</i> Nay, but what thing is this thing thou hast done?</p> <p><i>Althæa.</i> Look, I am silent, speak your eyes for me.</p> <p><i>Chorus.</i> I see a faint fire lightening from the hall.</p> <p><i>Althæa.</i> Gaze, stretch your eyes, strain till the lids drop off.</p> <p><i>Chorus.</i> Flushed pillars down the flickering vestibule.</p> <p><i>Althæa.</i> Stretch with your necks like birds: cry, chirp as they.</p> <p><i>Chorus.</i> And a long brand that blackens: and white dust.</p> <p><i>Althæa.</i> O children, what is this ye see? your eyes Are blinder than night's face at fall of moon. That is my son, my flesh, my fruit of life, My travail, and the year's weight of my womb, Meleager, a fire enkindled of mine hands And of mine hands extinguished: this is he.</p> <p><i>Chorus.</i> O gods, what word has flown out at thy mouth?</p> <p><i>Althæa.</i> I did this, and I say this, and I die.</p> <p><i>Chorus.</i> Death stands upon the doorway of thy lips, And in thy mouth has death set up his house.</p> <p><i>Althæa.</i> O death, a little, a little while, sweet death, Until I see the brand burnt down and die.</p> <p><i>Chorus.</i> She reels as any reed under the wind, And cleaves unto the ground with staggering feet.</p> <p><i>Althæa.</i> Girls, one thing will I say and hold my peace. I that did this will weep not nor cry out, Cry ye and weep: I will not call on gods, Call ye on them; I will not pity man, Show ye your pity. I know not if I live; Save that I feel the fire upon my face, And on my cheek the burning of a brand.</p>	<p>Yea, the smoke bites me; yea, I drink the steam With nostril and with eyelid and with lip Insatiate and intolerant; and mine hands Burn, and fire feeds upon mine eyes; I reel As one made drunk with living, whence he draws Drunken delight; yet I, though mad for joy, Loathe my long living, and am waxen red As with the shadow of shed blood; behold, I am kindled with the flames that fade in him, I am swollen with subsiding of his veins, I am flooded with his ebbing; my lit eyes Flame with the falling fire that leaves his lids Bloodless; my cheek is luminous with blood Because his face is ashen. Yet, O child, Son, first-born, fairest — O sweet mouth, sweet eyes, That drew my life out through my suckling breast, That shone and clove mine heart through — O soft knees Clinging, O tender treadings of soft feet, Cheeks warm with little kissings — O child, child, What have we made each other? Lo, I felt Thy weight cleave to me, a burden of beauty, O son, Thy cradled brows and loveliest loving lips, The floral hair, the little lightening eyes And all thy goodly glory; with mine hands Delicately I fed thee, with my tongue Tenderly spake, saying, Verily in God's time, For all the little likeness of thy limbs, Son, I shall make thee a kingly man to fight,</p>
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A lordly leader; and hear before I die,

"She bore the goodliest sword of all the world."

Oh! oh! For all my life turns round on me;

I am severed from myself, my name is gone,—

My name that was a healing, it is changed:

My name is a consuming. From this time,

Though mine eyes reach to the end of all these things,

My lips shall not unfasten till I die.

Semichorus. She has filled with sighing the city,

And the ways thereof with tears;
She arose, she girdled her sides,
She set her face as a bride's;
She wept, and she had no pity;
Trembled, and felt no fears.

Semichorus. Her eyes were clear as the sun,

Her brows were fresh as the day;
She girdled herself with gold,
Her robes were manifold;
But the days of her worship are done,

Her praise is taken away.

Semichorus. For she set her hand to the fire,

With her mouth she kindled the same;

As the mouth of a flute-player,
So was the mouth of her;

With the might of her strong desire

She blew the breath of the flame.

Semichorus. She set her hand to the wood,

She took the fire in her hand;

As one who is nigh to death,
She panted with strange breath
She opened her lips unto blood,

She breathed and kindled the brand.

Semichorus. As a wood-dove newly shot,

She sobbed and lifted her breast;

She sighed and covered her eyes,
Filling her lips with sighs;

She sighed, she withdrew herself not,
She refrained not, taking not rest.

Semichorus. But as the wind which is drouth,

And as the air which is death,

As storm that severeth ships,
Her breath severing her lips,
The breath came forth of her mouth,
And the fire came forth of her breath.

Second Messenger. Queen, and you maidens, there is come on us

A thing more deadly than the face of death:

Meleager the good lord is as one slain.

Semichorus. Without sword, without sword is he stricken;

Slain, and slain without hand.

Second Messenger. For as keen ice divided of the sun

His limbs divide, and as thawed snow the flesh

Thaws from off all his body to the hair.

Semichorus. He wastes as the embers quicken;

With the brand he fades as a brand.

Second Messenger. Even while they sang, and all drew hither, and he lifted both hands to crown the Arcadian's hair,

And fix the looser leaves, both hands fell down.

Semichorus. With rending of cheek and of hair

Lament ye, mourn for him, weep.

Second Messenger. Straightway the crown slid off, and smote on earth,

First fallen; and he, grasping his own hair, groaned,

And cast his raiment round his face, and fell.

Semichorus. Alas for visions that were,

And soothsayings spoken in sleep!

Second Messenger. But the king twitched his reins in, and leapt down,

And caught him, crying out twice "O child!" and thrice,

So that men's eyelids thickened with their tears.

Semichorus. Lament with a long lamentation,

Cry, for an end is at hand.

Second Messenger. "O son!" he said,
"son, lift thine eyes, draw breath,
Pity me!" But Meleager with sharp
lips

Gasped, and his face waxed like as sun-
burnt grass.

Semichorus. Cry aloud, O thou king-
dom, O nation,
O stricken, a ruinous land!

Second Messenger. Whereat king
Ceneus, straightening feeble
knees,

With feeble hands heaved up a lessen-
ing weight,

And laid him sadly in strange hands,
and wept.

Semichorus. Thou art smitten, her
lord, her desire,
Thy dear blood wasted as rain.

Second Messenger. And they with
tears and rendings of the beard
Bear hither a breathing body, wept
upon

And lightening at each footfall, sick to
death.

Semichorus. Thou madest thy sword
as a fire,

With fire for a sword thou art slain.

Second Messenger. And lo, the feast
turned funeral, and the crowns
Fallen; and the huntress and the hunter
trapped;

And weeping and changed faces and
veiled hair.

Meleager. Let your hands meet
Round the weight of my head;
Lift ye my feet

As the feet of the dead;
For the flesh of my body is molten, the
limbs of it molten as lead.

Chorus. O thy luminous face,
Thine imperious eyes!

O the grief, O the grace,
As of day when it dies!

Who is this bending over thee, lord,
with tears and suppression of
sighs?

Meleager. Is a bride so fair?
Is a maid so meek?

With unchaperled hair,
With unfileted cheek,

Atalanta, the pure among women, whose
name is as blessing to speak.

Atalanta. I would that with feet
Unsandalled, unshod,

Overbold, overfleet,

I had swum not nor trod

From Arcadia to Calydon northward,
a blast of the envy of God.

Meleager. Unto each man his fate;
Unto each as he saith

In whose fingers the weight
Of the world is as breath;

Yet I would that in clamor of battle
mine hands had laid hoid upon
death.

Chorus. Not with cleaving of shields
And their clash in thine ear,

When the lord of fought fields

Breaketh spear-shaft from spear,

Thou art broken, our lord, thou art
broken, with travail and labor
and fear.

Meleager. Would God he had found
me

Beneath fresh boughs!

Would God he had bound me

Unawares in mine house,

With light in mine eyes, and songs in my
lips, and a crown on my brows!

Chorus. Whence art thou sent from
us?

Whither thy goal?

How art thou rent from us,

Thou that wert whole,

As with severing of eyelids and eyes, as
with Sundering of body and soul!

Meleager. My heart is within me

As an ash in the fire;

Whosoever hath seen me,

Without lute, without lyre,

Shall sing of me grievous things, even
things that were ill to desire.

Chorus. Who shall raise thee

From the house of the dead?

Or what man praise thee

That thy praise may be said?

Alas thy beauty! alas thy body! alas
thine head!

Meleager. But thou, O mother,

The dreamer of dreams,

Wilt thou bring forth another

To feel the sun's beams

When I move among shadows a
shadow, and wail by impassable
streams?

Cæneus. What thing wilt thou leave me

Now this thing is done?

A man wilt thou give me,

A son for my son,

For the light of mine eyes, the desire of my life, the desirable one?

Chorus. Thou wert glad above others,

Yea, fair beyond word;

Thou wert glad among mothers;

For each man that heard

Of thee, praise there was added unto thee, as wings to the feet of a bird.

Cæneus. Who shall give back

Thy face of old years,

With travail made black,

Grown gray among fears,

Mother of sorrow, mother of cursing, mother of tears?

Meleager. Though thou art as fire

Fed with fuel in vain,

My delight, my desire,

Is more chaste than the rain,

More pure than the dewfall, more holy than stars are that live without stain.

Atalanta. I would that as water

My life's blood had thawed,

Or as winter's wan daughter

Leaves lowland and lawn

Spring-stricken, or ever mine eyes had beheld thee made dark in thy dawn.

Chorus. When thou dravest the men

Of the chosen of Thrace,

None turned him again,

Nor endured he thy face

Clothed round with the blush of the battle, with light from a terrible place.

Cæneus. Thou shouldst die as he dies

For whom none sheddeth tears;

Filling thine eyes

And fulfilling thine ears

With the brilliance of battle, the bloom and the beauty, the splendor of spears. ✓

Chorus. In the ears of the world

It is sung, it is told,

And the light thereof hurled

And the noise thereof rolled

From the Acroceraunian snow to the ford of the fleece of gold.

Meleager. Would God ye could carry me

Forth of all these;

Heap sand and bury me

By the Chersonese

Where the thundering Bosphorus answers the thunder of Pontic seas.

Cæneus. Dost thou mock at our praise

And the singing begun

And the men of strange days

Praising my son

In the folds of the hills of home, high places of Calydon?

Meleager. For the dead man no home is;

Ah, better to be

What the flower of the foam is ✓

In fields of the sea,

That the sea-waves might be as my raiment, the gulf-stream a garment for me.

Chorus. Who shall seek thee and bring

And restore thee thy day,

When the dove dipt her wing,

And the oars won their way

Where the narrowing Symplegades whitened the straits of Propontis with spray?

Meleager. Will ye crown me my tomb

Or exalt me my name,

Now my spirits consume,

Now my flesh is a flame?

Let the sea slake it once, and men speak of me sleeping to praise me or shame.

Chorus. Turn back now, turn thee,

As who turns him to wake;

Though the life in thee burn thee,

Couldst thou bathe it and slake

Where the sea-ridge of Helle hangs heavier, and east upon west waters break?

Meleager. Would the winds blow me back

Or the waves hurl me home?

Ah, to touch in the track

Where the pine learnt to roam

Cold girdles and crowns of the sea-gods, cool blossoms of water and foam!

Chorus. The gods may release
That they made fast;
Thy soul shall have ease
In thy limbs at the last;
But what shall they give thee for life,
sweet life that is overpast?
Meleager. Not the life of men's veins,
Not of flesh that conceives;
But the grace that remains,
The fair beauty that cleaves
To the life of the rains in the grasses,
the life of the dews on the
leaves.
Chorus. Thou wert helmsman and
chief;
Wilt thou turn in an hour,
Thy limbs to the leaf,
Thy face to the flower,
Thy blood to the water, thy soul to the
gods who divide and devour?
Meleager. The years are hungry,
They wail all their days;
The gods wax angry
And weary of praise;
And who shall bridle their lips? and
who shall straiten their ways?
Chorus. The gods guard over us
With sword and with rod;
Weaving shadow to cover us,
Heaping the sod,
That law may fulfil herself wholly, to
darken man's face before God.
Meleager. O holy head of CENEUS, lo
thy son
Guiltless, yet red from alien guilt, yet
foul
With kinship of contaminated lives,
Lo, for their blood I die; and mine
own blood
For blood-shedding of mine is mixed
therewith,
That death may not discern me from
my kin.
Yet with clean heart I die and faultless
hand,
Not shamefully; thou therefore of thy
love
Salute me, and bid fare among the
dead
Well, as the dead fare; for the best
man dead
Fares sadly; nathless I now faring
well

Pass without fear where nothing is to
fear,
Having thy love about me and thy
goodwill,
O father, among dark places and men
dead.
CENEUS. Child, I salute thee with sad
heart and tears,
And bid thee comfort, being a perfect
man
In fight, and honorable in the house
of peace.
The gods give thee fair wage and dues
of death,
And me brief days and ways to come
at thee.
Meleager. Pray thou thy days be long
before thy death,
And full of ease and kingdom; seeing
in death
There is no comfort and none after-
growth,
Nor shall one thence look up and see
day's dawn
Nor light upon the land whither I go.
Live thou, and take thy fill of days, and
die
When thy day comes; and make not
much of death,
Lest ere thy day thou reap an evil
thing.
Thou too, the bitter mother and mother-
plague
Of this my weary body—thou too,
queen,
The source and end, the sower and the
scythe,
The rain that ripens and the drought
that slays,
The sand that swallows and the spring
that feeds,
To make me and unmake me, — thou, I
say,
Althæa, since my father's ploughshare,
drawn
Through fatal seedland of a female
field,
Furrowed thy body, whence a wheaten
ear
Strong from the sun and fragrant from
the rains
I sprang, and cleft the closure of thy
womb,

✓ Mother, I dying with unforgetful tongue
Hail thee as holy, and worship thee as
just,

Who art unjust and unholy; and with
my knees

Would worship, but thy fire and subtlety,

Dissundering them, devour me; for
these limbs

Are as light dust and crumbings from
mine urn

Before the fire has touched them; and
my face

As a dead leaf or dead foot's mark on
snow,

And all this body a broken barren tree
That was so strong, and all this flower
of life

Disbranched and desecrated miserably,

And minished all that godlike muscle
and might,

And lesser than a man's: for all my
veins

Fail me, and all mine ashen life burns
down.

I would thou hadst let me live; but
gods averse,

But fortune, and the fiery feet of change,
And time, these would not, these tread
out my life, —

These and not thou; me too thou hast
loved, and I

Thee; but this death was mixed with
all my life,

Mine end with my beginning: and this
law,

✓ This only, slays me, and not my mother
at all.

And let no brother or sister grieve too
sore,

Nor melt their hearts out on me with
their tears,

Since extreme love and sorrowing over-
much

Vex the great gods, and over-loving men
Slay and are slain for love's sake; and
this house

Shall bear much better children; why
should these

Weep? but in patience let them live
their lives

And mine pass by forgotten: thou alone,

Mother, thou sole and only, thou not
these,

Keep me in mind a little when I die
Because I was thy first-born; let thy
soul

Pity me, pity even me gone hence and
dead.

Though thou wert wroth, and though
thou bear again

Much happier sons, and all men later
born

Exceedingly excel me, yet do thou
Forget not, nor think shame; I was thy
son.

Time was, I did not shame thee; and
time was,

I thought to live, and make thee hono-
rable

With deeds as great as these men's: but
they live,

These, and I die; and what thing should
have been,

Surely I know not; yet I charge thee.
seeing

I am dead already, love me not the less.
Me, O my mother! I charge thee by
these gods,

My father's, and that holier breast of
thine,

By these that see me dying, and that
which nursed,

Love me not less, thy first-born: though
grief come,

Grief only, of me, and of all these great
joy,

And shall come always to thee; for
thou knowest, ✓

O mother, O breasts that bare me, for
ye know,

O sweet head of my mother, sacred eyes,
Ye know my soul albeit I sinned, ye
know

Albeit I kneel not, neither touch thy
knees,

But with my lips I kneel, and with my
heart

I fall about thy feet and worship thee.
And ye farewell now, all my friends;
and ye,

Kinsmen, much younger and glorious
more than I,

Sons of my mother's sister; and all
farewell

That were in Colchis with me, and bare
 down
 The waves and wars that met us: and
 though times
 Change, and though now I be not any
 thing,
 Forget not me among you, what I did
 In my good time; for even by all those
 days,
 Those days and this, and your own liv-
 ing souls,
 And by the light and'luck of you that
 live,
 And by this miserable spoil, and me
 Dying, I beseech you, let my name not
 die.
 But thou, dear, touch me with thy rose-
 like hands,
 And fasten up mine eyelids with thy
 mouth,
 A bitter kiss; and grasp me with thine
 arms,
 Printing with heavy lips my light waste
 flesh,
 Made light and thin by heavy-handed
 fate,
 And with thine holy maiden eyes drop
 dew,
 Drop tears for dew upon me who am
 dead,
 Me who have loved thee; seeing with-
 out sin done
 I am gone down to the empty weary
 house
 Where no flesh is, nor beauty, nor swift
 eyes,

Nor sound of mouth, nor might of hands
 and feet.
 But thou, dear, hide my body with thy
 veil,
 And with thy raiment cover foot and
 head,
 And stretch thyself upon me, and touch
 hands
 With hands and lips with lips: be pitiful
 As thou art maiden perfect; let no man
 Defile me to despise me, saying, This
 man
 Died woman-wise, a woman's offering,
 slain
 Through female fingers in his woof of
 life,
 Dishonorable; for thou hast honored
 me.
 And now for God's sake kiss me once
 and twice,
 And let me go; for the night gathers me,
 And in the night shall no man gather
 fruit.
Atalanta. Hail thou! but I with
 heavy face and feet
 Turn homeward, and am gone out of
 thine eyes.
Chorus. Who shall contend with his
 lords,
 Or cross them, or do them wrong?
 Who shall bind them as with cords?
 Who shall tame them as with song?
 Who shall smite them as with
 swords?
 For the hands of their kingdom are
 strong.

Melancholy Comment is actual, in the

Swainburne!

ERECHTHEUS: A TRAGEDY.

DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER.

PERSONS.

ERECHTHEUS.
CHIEF OF ATHENIAN
ELDERS.

PRAXITHEA.
CITHÆRA.
HERALD OF ECTHOLPUS.

MESSENGER.
ATHENIAN HERALD.
ATHEKA.

<i>Erechtheus.</i> Mother of life and death and all men's days, Earth, whom I chief of all men born would bless, And call thee with more loving lips than theirs Mother, for of this very body of thine And living blood I have my breath and live, Behold me, even thy son, me crowned of men, Me made thy child by that strong, cunning god Who fashions fire and iron, who begat Me for a sword and beacon-fire on thee, Me fosterling of Pallas, in her shade Reared, that I first might pay the nursing debt, Hallowing her fame with flower of third-year feasts, And first bow down the bridled strength of steeds To lose the wild wont of their birth, and bear Clasp of man's knees and steerage of his hand, Or fourfold service of his fire-swift wheels That whirl the four-yoked chariot; me the king	Who stand before thee naked now, and cry, O holy and general mother of all men born, But mother most and motherliest of mine, Earth, for I ask thee rather of all the gods, What have we done? what word mis- timed or work Hath winged the wild feet of this time- less curse To fall as fire upon us? Lo, I stand Here on this brow's crown of the city's head That crowns its lovely body, till death's hour Waste it; but now the dew of dawn and birth Is fresh upon it from thy womb, and we Behold it born how beauteous: one day more I see the world's wheel of the circling sun Roll up rejoicing to regard on earth This one thing goodliest, fair as heaven or he, Worth a god's gaze or strife of gods; but now
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<p>Would this day's ebb of their spent wave of strife Sweep it to sea, wash it on wreck, and leave A costless thing contemned; and in our stead, Where these walls were, and sounding streets of men, Make wide a waste for tongueless water-herds And spoil of ravening fishes; that no more Should men say, Here was Athens. This shalt thou Sustain not, nor thy son endure to see, Nor thou to live and look on; for the womb Bare me not base that bare me miser- able, To hear this loud brood of the Thra- cian foam Break its broad strength of billowy- beating war Here, and upon it as a blast of death Blowing, the keen wrath of a fire-souled king, A strange growth grafted on our natu- ral soil, A root of Thrace in Eleusinian earth Set for no comfort to the kindly land, Son of the sea's lord and our first-born foe, Eumolpus; nothing sweet in ears of thine The music of his making, nor a song Toward hopes of ours auspicious; for the note Rings as for death oracular to thy sons That goes before him on the sea-wind blown Full of this charge laid on me, to put out The brief light kindled of mine own child's life, Or with this helmsman hand that steers the state Run right on the under shoal and ridge of death The populous ship with all its fraught- age gone, And sails that were to take the wind of time</p>	<p>Rent, and the tackling that should hold out fast In confluent surge of loud calamities Broken, with spars of rudders and lost oars That were to row toward harbor, and find rest In some most glorious haven of all the world, And else may never near it: such a song The gods have set his lips on fire withal Who threatens now in all their names to bring Ruin; but none of these, thou knowest, have I Chid with my tongue, or cursed at heart for grief, Knowing how the soul runs reinless on sheer death Whose grief or joy takes part against the gods. And what they will is more than our desire, And their desire is more than what we will. For no man's will and no desire of man's Shall stand as doth a god's will. Yet, O fair Mother, that seest me how I cast no word - Against them, plead no reason, crave no cause, Boast me not blameless, nor bewEEP me wronged, By this fair wreath of towers we have decked thee with, This chaplet that we give thee woven of walls, This girdle of gate and temple and cita- del Drawn round beneath thy bosom, and fast linked As to thine heart's root, — this dear crown of thine, This present light, this city, — be not thou Slow to take heed nor slack to strength- en her, Fare we so short-lived howsoe'er, and pay</p>
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What price we may to ransom thee thy town,
 Not me my life; but thou that diest not, thou,
 Though all our house die for this people's sake,
 Keep thou for ours thy crown our city, guard
 And give it life the lovelier that we died.

Chorus. Sun, that hast lightened and loosed by thy might
 Ocean and Earth from the lordship of night,
 Quickening with vision his eye that was veiled,
 Freshening the force in her heart that had failed,
 That sister fettered and blinded brother
 Should have sight by thy grace and delight of each other,
 Behold now and see

What profit is given them of thee;
 What wrath has enkindled with madness of mind
 Her limbs that were bounden, his face that was blind,
 To be locked as in wrestle together, and lighten
 With fire that shall darken thy fire in the sky,
 Body to body and eye against eye
 In a war against kind,
 Till the bloom of her fields and her high hills whiten

With the foam of his waves more high.
 For the sea-marks set to divide of old
 The kingdoms to Ocean and Earth assigned,

The hoar sea-fields from the cornfields' gold,
 His wine-bright waves from her vineyards' fold,

Frail forces we find
 To bridle the spirit of gods or bind
 Till the heat of their hearts wax cold.

But the peace that was established between them to stand
 Is rent now in twain by the strength of his hand

Who stirs up the storm of his sons overbold
 To pluck from fight what he lost of right,
 By council and judgment of gods that spake
 And gave great Pallas the strife's fair stake,
 The lordship and love of the lovely land,
 The grace of the town that hath on it for crown

But a headband to wear
 Of violets one-hued with her hair:
 For the vales and the green high places of earth
 Hold nothing so fair,
 And the depths of the sea bear no such birth

Of the manifold births they bear.
 Too well, too well was the great stake worth

A strife divine for the gods to judge,
 A crowned god's triumph, a foiled god's grudge,
 Though the loser be strong and the victress wise

Who played long since for so large a prize,

The fruitful immortal anointed adored
 Dear city of men without master or lord,

Fair fortress and fostress of sons born free,
 Who stand in her sight and in thine, O sun,

Slaves of no man, subjects of none;
 A wonder enthroned on the hills and sea,

A maiden crowned with a fourfold glory

That none from the pride of her head may rend,

Violet and olive-leaf purple and hoary,

Song-wreath and story the fairest of fame,

Flowers that the winter can blast not or bend;

A light upon earth as the sun's own flame,

A name as his name,
 Athens, a praise without end.

A noise is arisen against us of waters,
 A sound as of battle come up from the sea.
 Strange hunters are hard on us, hearts without pity;
 They have staked their nets round the fair young city,
 That the sons of her strength and her virgin daughters
 Should find not whither alive to flee.
 And we know not yet of the word unwritten,
 The doom of the Pythian we have not heard;
 From the navel of earth and the veiled mid altar
 We wait for a token with hopes that falter,
 With fears that hang on our hearts thought-smitten
 Lest her tongue be kindled with no good word.
 O thou not born of the womb, nor bred
 In the bride-night's warmth of a changed god's bed,
 But thy life as a lightning was flashed from the light of thy father's head,
 O chief god's child by a motherless birth,
 If aught in thy sight we indeed be worth,
 Keep death from us thou, that art none of the gods of the dead under earth.
 Thou that hast power on us, save, if thou wilt;
 Let the blind wave breach not thy wall scarce built;
 But bless us not so as by bloodshed, impute not for grace to us guilt,
 Nor by price of pollution of blood set us free;
 Let the hands be taintless that clasp thy knee,
 Nor a maiden be slain to redeem for a maiden her shrine from the sea.
 O earth, O sun, turn back
 Full on his deadly track

Death, that would smite you black and mar your creatures,
 And with one hand disroot
 All tender flower and fruit,
 With one strike blind and mute the heaven's fair features,
 Pluck out the eyes of morn, and make
 Silence in the east and blackness whence the bright songs break.
 Help, earth, help, heaven, that hear
 The song-notes of our fear,
 Shrewd notes and shrill, not clear or joyful-sounding;
 Hear, highest of gods, and stay
 Death on his hunter's way,
 Full on his forceless prey his beagles hounding;
 Break thou his bow, make short his hand,
 Maim his fleet foot whose passage kills the living land.
 Let a third wave smite not us, father,
 Long since sore smitten of twain,
 Lest the house of thy son's son perish,
 And his name be barren on earth.
 Whose race wilt thou comfort rather
 If none to thy son remain?
 Whose seed wilt thou choose to cherish
 If his be cut off in the birth?
 For the first fair graft of his grafting
 Was rent from its maiden root
 By the strong swift hand of a lover
 Who fills the night with his breath;
 On the lip of the stream low-laughing
 Her green soft virginal shoot
 Was plucked from the stream-side cover
 By the grasp of a love like death.
 For a god's was the mouth that kissed her
 Who speaks, and the leaves lie dead,
 When winter awakes as at warning
 To the sound of his foot from Thrace.
 Nor happier the bed of her sister,
 Though Love's self laid her abed
 By a bridegroom beloved of the morning
 And fair as the dawn's own face.

For Procris, ensnared and ensnaring By the fraud of a twofold wile, With the point of her own spear stricken, By the gift of her own hand fell.	Nor now too would I fear thee, now misdoubt Lest fate should find thee lesser than thy doom, Chosen if thou be to bear and to be great
Oversubtle in doubts, overdaring In deeds and devices of guile, And strong to quench as to quicken, O Love, have we named thee well?	Haply beyond all women; and the word Speaks thee divine, dear queen, that speaks thee dead,
By thee was the spear's edge whetted That laid her dead in the dew, In the moist green glens of the midland, By her dear lord slain and thee.	Dead being alive, or quick and dead in one Shall not men call thee living? yet I fear
And him at the cliff's end fretted By the gray keen waves, him too, Thine hand from the white-browed headland Flung down for a spoil to the sea.	To slay thee timeless with my proper tongue, With lips, thou knowest, that love thee; and such work Was never laid of gods on men, such word
But enough now of griefs gray-growing Have darkened the house divine, Have flowered on its boughs, and faded, And green is the brave stock yet.	No mouth of man learnt ever, as from mine, Most loath to speak, thine ear most loath shall take, And hold it hateful as the grave to hear.
O father all-seeing and all-knowing, Let the last fruit fall not of thine From the tree with whose boughs we are shaded, From the stock that thy son's hand set.	<i>Praxithea.</i> That word there is not in all speech of man, King, that being spoken of the gods and thee
<i>Erechtheus.</i> O daughter of Cephisus, from all time Wise have I found thee, wife and queen, of heart Perfect; nor in the days that knew not wind Nor days when storm blew death upon our peace Was thine heart swoln with seed of pride, or bowed With blasts of bitter fear that break men's souls Who lift too high their minds toward heaven; in thought Too godlike grown for worship; but of mood Equal, in good time reverent of time bad, And glad in ill days of the good that were.	I have not heart to honor, or dare hold More than I hold thee or the gods in hate Hearing; but if my heart abhor it heard Being insubmissive, hold me not thy wife, But use me like a stranger, whom thine hand Hath fed by chance, and finding thence no thanks Flung off for shame's sake to forget- fulness.
	<i>Erechtheus.</i> O, of what breath shall such a word be made, Or from what heart find utterance? Would my tongue Were rent forth rather from the quiver- ing root Than made as fire or poison thus for thee. <i>Praxithea.</i> But if thou speak of blood, and I that hear

Be chosen of all for this land's love to die,
 And save to thee thy city, know this well,
 I happiest I hold me of her seed alive.

Erechtheus. O sun that seest, what saying was this of thine,
 God, that thy power has breathed into my lips?

For from no sunlit shrine darkling it came.

Praxithea. What portent from the mid oracular place

Hath smitten thee so like a curse that flies

Wingless, to waste men with its plagues? Yet speak.

Erechtheus. Thy blood the gods require not; take this first.

Praxithea. To me than thee more grievous this should sound.

Erechtheus. That word rang truer and bitterer than it knew.

Praxithea. This is not then thy grief, to see me die?

Erechtheus. Die shalt thou not, yet give thy blood to death.

Praxithea. If this ring worse, I know not: strange it rang.

Erechtheus. Alas! thou knowest not; woe is me that know!

Praxithea. And woe shall mine be, knowing; yet halt not here.

Erechtheus. Guiltless of blood this state may stand no more.

Praxithea. Firm let it stand, whatever bleed or fall.

Erechtheus. O gods, that I should say it shall, and weep!

Praxithea. Weep, and say this? no tears should bathe such words.

Erechtheus. Woe's me that I must weep upon them! woe!

Praxithea. What stain is on them for thy tears to cleanse?

Erechtheus. A stain of blood un-urgeable with tears.

Praxithea. Whence? for thou sayest it is and is not mine.

Erechtheus. Hear then, and know why only of all men I

That bring such news as mine is, I alone

Must wash good words with weeping: I and thou,

Woman, must wait to hear men sing, must groan

To see their joy who love us; all our friends

Save only we, and all save we that love This holiness of Athens, in our sight

Shall lift their hearts up, in our hearing praise

Gods whom we may not; for to these they give

Life of their children, flower of all their seed,

For all their travail fruit, for all their hopes

Harvest; but we for all our good things, we

Have at their hands which fill all these folk full

Death, barrenness, child-slaughter, curses, cares,

Sea-leaguer and land-shipwreck; which of these,

Which wilt thou first give thanks for? all are thine.

Praxithea. What first they give who give this city good,

For that first given to save it I give thanks

First, and thanks heartier from a happier tongue,

More than for any my peculiar grace Shown me and not my country; next

for this, That none of all these, but for all these I,

Must bear my burden, and no eye but mine

Weep of all women's in this broad land born

Who see their land's deliverance; but much more,

But most for this I thank them most of all,

That this their edge of doom is chosen to pierce

My heart, and not my country's; for the sword

Drawn to smite there, and sharpened for such stroke

Should wound more deep than any turned on me.

Chorus. Well fares the land that
bears such fruit, and well
The spirit that breeds such thought
and speech in man.

Erechtheus. O woman, thou hast
shamed my heart with thine,
To show so strong a patience: take
then all;
For all shall break not nor bring down
thy soul.

The word that journeying to the bright
god's shrine
Who speaks askance and darkling, but
his name

Hath in it slaying and ruin broad writ
out,

I heard, hear thou: thus saith he:
There shall die

One soul for all this people; from thy
womb

Came forth the seed that here on dry
bare ground

Death's hand must sow untimely, to
bring forth

Nor blade nor shoot in season, being
by name

To the under gods made holy, who re-
quire

For this land's life her death and
maiden blood

To save a maiden city. Thus I heard,
And thus with all said leave thee; for
save this

No word is left us, and no hope alive.

Chorus. He hath uttered too surely
his wrath not obscurely, nor
wrapt as in mists of his breath,
The master that lightens not hearts he
enlightens, but gives them fore-
knowledge of death.

As a bolt from the cloud hath he
sent it aloud, and proclaimed it
afar,

From the darkness and height of the
horror of night hath he shown
us a star.

Star may I name it, and err not, or
flame shall I say,

Born of the womb that was born
for the tomb of the day?

O Night, whom other but thee for moth-
er, and Death for the father,
Night,

Shall we dream to discover, save thee
and thy lover, to bring such a
sorrow to sight?

From the slumberless bed for thy
bedfellow spread, and his bride
under earth,

Hast thou brought forth a wild and
insatiable child, an unbearable
birth.

Fierce are the fangs of his wrath,
and the pangs that they give;

None is there, none that may bear
them, not one that would live.

Chthonia. Forth of the fine-spun folds
of veils that hide

My virgin chamber toward the full-faced
sun

I set my foot, not moved of mine own
will,

Unmaidenlike, nor with unprompted
speed

Turn eyes too broad or dog-like un-
abashed

On reverend heads of men and thence
on thine,

Mother, now covered from the light
and bowed

As hers who mourns her brethren; but
what grief

Bends thy blind head thus earthward,
holds thus mute,

I know not till thy will be to lift up
Toward mine thy sorrow-muffled eyes,
and speak;

And till thy will be, would I know this
not.

Praxithea. Old men and childless, or
if sons ye have seen

And daughters, elder-born were these
than mine,

Look on this child, how young of years,
how sweet,

How scant of time and green of age
her life

Puts forth its flower of girlhood; and
her gait

How virginal, how soft her speech, her
eyes

How seemly smiling. Wise should all
ye be,

All honorable and kindly men of age:
Now give me counsel and one word to
say

That I may bear to speak, and hold my
 peace
 Henceforth for all time even as all ye
 now.
 Dumb are ye all, bowed eyes and
 tongueless mouths,
 Unprofitable: if this were wind that
 speaks,
 As much its breath might move you.
 Thou then, child,
 Set thy sweet eyes on mine; look
 through them well;
 Take note of all the writing of my
 face
 As of a tablet or a tomb inscribed
 That bears me record; lifeless now, my
 life
 Thereon that was, think written; brief
 to read,
 Yet shall the scripture sear thine eyes
 as fire,
 And leave them dark as dead men's.
 Nay, dear child,
 Thou hast no skill, my maiden, and no
 sense
 To take such knowledge; sweet is all
 thy lore,
 And all this bitter: yet I charge thee,
 learn
 And love and lay this up within thine
 heart,
 Even this my word: less ill it were to
 die,
 Than live and look upon thy mother
 dead,
 Thy mother-land that bare thee; no
 man slain
 But him who hath seen it shall men
 count unblest,
 None blest as him who hath died and
 seen it not.
Chthonia. That sight some god keep
 from me though I die!
Praxithea. A god from thee shall
 keep it: fear not this.
Chthonia. Thanks all my life long
 shall he gain of mine.
Praxithea. Short gain of all yet shall
 he get of thee.
Chthonia. Brief be my life, yet so
 long live my thanks.
Praxithea. So long? so little; how
 long shall they live?

Chthonia. Even while I see the sun-
 light and thine eyes.
Praxithea. Would mine might shut
 ere thine upon the sun!
Chthonia. For me thou prayest un-
 kindly; change that prayer.
Praxithea. Not well for me thou say-
 est, and ill for thee.
Chthonia. Nay, for me well, if thou
 shalt live, not I.
Praxithea. How live, and lose these
 loving looks of thine?
Chthonia. It seems I too, thus pray-
 ing, then, love thee not.
Praxithea. Lov'st thou not life? what
 wouldst thou do to die?
Chthonia. Well, but not more than
 all things, love I life.
Praxithea. And fain wouldst keep it
 as thine age allows?
Chthonia. Fain would I live, and fain
 not fear to die.
Praxithea. That I might bid thee die
 not! Peace; no more.
Chorus. A godlike race of grief the
 gods have set
 For these to run matched equal, heart
 with heart.
Praxithea. Child of the chief of
 gods, and maiden crowned,
 Queen of these towers and fofress of
 their king,
 Pallas, and thou my father's holiest
 head,
 A living well of life nor stanch'd nor
 stained,
 O God Cephisus, thee too charge I
 next,
 Be to me judge and witness; nor thine
 ear
 Shall now my tongue invoke not, thou
 to me
 Most hateful of things holy, mourn-
 fullest
 Of all old sacred streams that wash the
 world,
 Illissus, on whose marge at flowery play
 A whirlwind-footed bridegroom found
 my child,
 And rapt her northward where mine
 elder-born
 Keeps now the Thracian bride-bed of a
 god

Intolerable to seamen, but this land Finds him in hope for her sake favor- able,	The strong king of the tempest-rifted sea Loosed reinless on the low Thriasian plain
A gracious son by wedlock: hear me then	The thunders of his chariots, swallow- ing stunned
Thou likewise, if with no faint heart or false	Earth, beasts, and men, the whole blind foundering world
The word I say be said, the gift be given,	That was the sun's at morning, and ere noon
Which, might I choose, I had rather die than give	Death's; nor this only prey fulfilled his mind;
Or speak and die not. Ere thy limbs were made,	For with strange crook-toothed prows of Carian folk
Or thine eyes lightened, strife, thou knowest, my child,	Who snatch a sanguine life out of the sea,
*Twixt god and god had risen, which heavenlier name	Thieves keen to pluck their bloody fruit of spoil
Should here stand hallowed, whose more liberal grace	From the gray fruitless waters, has their god
Should win this city's worship, and our land	Furrowed our shores to waste them, as the fields
To which of these do reverence; first the lord	Were landward harried from the north with swords
Whose wheels make lightnings of the foam-flowered sea	Aonian, sickles of man-slaughtering edge
I here on this rock, whose height brow- bound with dawn	Ground for no hopeful harvest of live grain
Is head and heart of Athens, one sheer blow	Against us in Bœotia: these being spent,
Struck, and beneath the triple wound that shook	Now this third time his wind of wrath has blown
The stony sinews and stark roots of the earth	Right on this people a mightier wave of war,
Sprang toward the sun a sharp salt fount, and sank	Three times more huge a ruin; such its ridge
Where lying it lights the heart up of the hill,	Foam-rimmed and hollow like the womb of heaven,
A well of bright strange brine; but she that reared	But black for shining, and with death for life
Thy father with her same chaste foster- ing hand	Big now to birth and ripe with child, full-blown
Set for a sign against it in our guard	With fear and fruit of havoc, takes the sun
The holy bloom of the olive, whose hoar leaf	Out of our eyes, darkening the day, and blinds
High in the shadowy shrine of Pandro- sus	The fair sky's face unseasonably with change,
I hath honor of us all; and of this strife	A cloud in one and billow of battle, a surge
The twelve most high gods judging with one mouth	High reared as heaven with monstrous surf of spears
Acclaimed her victress: wroth whereat, as wronged	That shake on us their shadow, till men's heads
That she should hold from him such prize and place,	

<p>Bend, and their hearts even with its forward wind Wither, so blasts all seed in them of hope Its breath and blight of presage; yea, even now The winter of this wind out of the deeps Makes cold our trust in comfort of the gods, And blinds our eye toward outlook; yet not here, Here never shall the Thracian plant on high For ours his father's symbol, nor with wreaths A strange folk wreath it, upright set and crowned Here where our natural people born behold The golden Gorgon of the shield's de- fence That screens their flowering olive, nor strange gods Be graced, and Pallas here have praise no more. And if this be not I must give my child, Thee, mine own very blood and spirit of mine, Thee to be slain. Turn from me, turn thine eyes A little from me: I can bear not yet To see if still they smile on mine or no, If fear make faint the light in them, or faith Fix them as stars of safety. Need have we, Sore need of stars that set not in mid storm, Lights that outlast the lightnings; yet my heart Endures not to make proof of thine or these, Not yet to know thee whom I made, and bare What manner of woman: had I borne thee man, I had made no question of thine eyes or heart, Nor spared to read the scriptures in them writ, Wert thou my son; yet couldst thou then but die,</p>	<p>Fallen in sheer fight by chance and charge of spears, And have no more of memory, fill no tomb More famous than thy fellows in fair field, Where many share the grave, many the praise; But one crown shall one only girl my child Wear, dead for this dear city, and give back life To him that gave her and to me that bare, And save two sisters living; and all this, Is this not all good? I shall give thee, child, Thee but by fleshly nature mine, to bleed For dear land's love; but if the city fall What part is left me in my children then? But if it stand, and thou for it lie dead, Then hast thou in it a better part than we, A holier portion than we all; for each Hath but the length of his own life to live, And this most glorious mother-land on earth To worship till that life have end: but thine Hath end no more than hers; thou, dead, shalt live Till Athens live not; for the days and nights Given of thy bare brief dark dividual life, Shall she give thee half all her age long own And all its glory; for thou givest her these; But with one hand she takes, and gives again More than I gave, or she requires of thee. Come therefore, I will make thee fit for death; I that could give thee, dear, no gift at birth Save of light life that breathes and bleeds, even I</p>
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Will help thee to this better gift than mine,

And lead thee by this little living hand,
That death shall make so strong, to
that great end

Whence it shall lighten like a god's,
and strike

Dead the strong heart of battle that
would break

Athens; but ye, pray for this land, old
men,

That it may bring forth never child on
earth

To love it less, for none may more,
than we.

Chorus. Out of the north wind grief
came forth,

And the shining of a sword out of
the sea.

Yea, of old the first-blown blast blew
the prelude of this last,

The blast of his trumpet upon Rhodope.

Out of the north skies full of his cloud,
With the clamor of his storms as of a
crowd

At the wheels of a great king crying
aloud,

At the axle of a strong king's car
That has girded on the girdle of war, —

With hands that lightened the skies in
sunder,

And feet whose fall was followed of
thunder,

A god, a great god strange of name,
With horse-yoke fleeter-hoofed than
flame,

To the mountain bed of a maiden came,
Oreithyia, the bride mismated,

Wofully wed in a snow-strewn bed
With a bridegroom that kisses the

bride's mouth dead;

Without garland, without glory, without
song,

As a fawn by night on the hills belated,
Given over for a spoil unto the strong.

From lips how pale so keen a wail
At the grasp of a god's hand on her
she gave,

When his breath that darkens air made
a havoc of her hair,

It rang from the mountain even to
the wave, —

Rang with a cry, *Woe's me, woe is me!*
From the darkness upon Hæmus to the
sea;

And with hands that clung to her new
lord's knee,

As a virgin overborne with shame,
She besought him by her spouseless
fame,

By the blameless breasts of a maid un-
married

And locks unmaidenly rent and harried,
And all her flower of body, born

To match the maidenhood of morn,
With the might of the wind's wrath

wrenched and torn.

Vain, all vain as a dead man's vision
Falling by night in his old friend's
sight,

To be scattered with slumber and
slain ere light;

Such a breath of such a bridegroom
in that hour

Of her prayers made mock, of her
fears derision,

And a ravage of her youth as of a
flower.

With a leap of his limbs as a lion's, a
cry from his lips as of thunder,

In a storm of anorous godhead filled
with fire,

From the height of the heaven that was
rent with the roar of his coming
in sunder,

Sprang the strong god on the spoil
of his desire.

And the pines of the hills were as
green reeds shattered,

And their branches as buds of the
soft spring scattered,

And the west wind and east, and the
sound of the south,

Fell dumb at the blast of the north
wind's mouth,

At the cry of his coming out of
heaven.

And the wild beasts quailed in the
rifts and hollows

Where hound nor clarion of hunts-
man follows,

And the depths of the sea were
aghast, and whitened,

And the crowns of their waves were
as flame that lightened,

And the heart of the floods thereof
 was riven.
 But she knew not him coming for terror,
 she felt not her wrong that he
 wrought her,
 When her locks as leaves were shed
 before his breath,
 And she heard not for terror his prayer,
 though the cry was a god's that
 besought her,
 Blown from lips that strew the world-
 wide seas with death.
 For the heart was molten within her
 to hear,
 And her knees beneath her were
 loosened for fear,
 And her blood fast bound as a frost-
 bound water,
 And the soft new bloom of the green
 earth's daughter
 Wind-wasted as blossom of a tree ;
 As the wild god rapt her from earth's
 breast lifted,
 On the strength of the stream of his
 dark breath drifted,
 From the bosom of earth as a bride
 from the mother,
 With storm for bridesman and wreck
 for brother,
 As a cloud that he sheds upon the
 sea.

 Of this hoary-headed woe
 Song made memory long ago ;
 Now a younger grief to mourn
 Needs a new song younger born.
 Who shall teach our tongues to
 reach
 What strange height of saddest
 speech,
 For the new bride's sake that is given
 to be
 A stay to fetter the foot of the sea,
 Lest it quite spurn down and trample
 the town,
 Ere the violets be dead that were
 plucked for its crown,
 Or its olive-leaf whiten and with-
 er?
 Who shall say of the wind's way
 That he journeyed yesterday,
 Or the track of the storm that shall
 sound to-morrow,

If the new be more than the gray-
 grown sorrow?
 For the wind of the green first season
 was keen,
 And the blast shall be sharper than
 blew between
 That the breath of the sea blows
 hither.
Herald of Eumolpus. Old men, gray
 borderers on the march of death,
 Tongue-fighters, tough of talk and sin-
 ewy speech,
 Else nerveless, from no crew of such
 faint folk
 Whose tongues are stouter than their
 hands come I
 To bid not you to battle : let them strike
 Whose swords are sharper than your
 keen-tongued wail,
 And ye, sit fast and sorrow ; but what
 man
 Of all this land-folk and earth-labor-
 ing herd
 For heart or hand seems foremost, him
 I call,
 If heart be his to hearken, him bid forth
 To try if one be in the sun's sight born
 Of all that grope and grovel on dry
 ground
 That may join hands in battle-grip for
 death
 With them whose seed and strength is
 of the sea.
Chorus. Know thou this much for all
 thy loud blast blown,
 We lack not hands to speak with,
 swords to plead,
 For proof of peril, not of boisterous
 breath,
 Sea-wind and storm of barren mouths
 that foam
 And rough rock's edge of menace ; and
 short space
 May lessen thy large ignorance, and
 inform
 This insolence with knowledge if there
 live
 Men earth-begotten of no tenderer
 thews
 Than knit the great joints of the grim
 sea's brood
 With hasps of steel together ; heaven
 to help,

One man shall break, even on their own
flood's verge,

That iron bulk of battle; but thine eye
That sees it now swell higher than sand
or shore

Haply shall see not when thine host
shall shrink.

Herald of Eumolpus. Not haply, nay,
but surely, shall not thine.

Chorus. That lot shall no god give
who fights for thee.

Herald of Eumolpus. Shall gods bear
bit and bridle, fool, of men?

Chorus. Nor them forbid we, nor shalt
thou constrain.

Herald of Eumolpus. Yet say'st thou
none shall make the good lot
mine?

Chorus. Of thy side none, nor moved
for fear of thee.

Herald of Eumolpus. Gods hast thou
then to baffle gods of ours?

Chorus. Nor thine nor mine, but
equal-souled are they.

Herald of Eumolpus. Toward good
and ill, then, equal-eyed of soul?

Chorus. Nay, but swift-eyed to note
where ill thoughts breed.

Herald of Eumolpus. Thy shaft word-
feathered flies yet far of me.

Chorus. Pride knows not, wounded,
till the heart be cleft.

Herald of Eumolpus. No shaft wounds
deep whose wing is plumed with
words.

Chorus. Lay that to heart, and bid
thy tongue learn grace.

Herald of Eumolpus. Grace shall thine
own crave soon too late of mine.

Chorus. Boast thou till then, but I
wage words no more.

Erechtheus. Man, what shrill wind of
speech and wrangling air

Blows in our ears a summons from thy
lips

Winged with what message, or what
gift or grace

Requiring? none but what his hand
may take

Here may the foe think hence to reap,
nor this

Except some doom from Godward yield
it him.

Herald of Eumolpus. King of this
land-folk, by my mouth to thee

Thus saith the son of him that shakes
thine earth,

Eumolpus; now the stakes of war are
set,

For land or sea to win by throw and
wear;

Choose therefore or to quit thy side,
and give

The palm unfought for to his bloodless
hand,

Or by that father's sceptre, and the foot
Whose tramp far off makes tremble for
pure fear

Thy soul-struck mother, piercing like a
sword

The immortal womb that bare thee; by
the waves

That no man bridles, and that bound
thy world,

And by the winds and storms of all the
sea,

He swears to raze from eyeshot of the
sun

This city named not of his father's
name,

And wash to deathward down one flood
of doom

This whole fresh brood of earth yeaned
naturally,

Green yet and faint in its first blade,
unblown

With yellow hope of harvest: so do
thou,

Seeing whom thy time is come to meet,
for fear

Yield, or gird up thy force to fight and
die.

Erechtheus. To fight then be it; for
if to die or live,

No man but only a god knows this
much yet,

Seeing us fare forth, who bear but in
our hands

The weapons not the fortunes of our
fight;

For these now rest as lots that yet
undrawn

Lie in the lap of the unknown hour;
but this

I know, not thou, whose hollow mouth
of storm

<p>Is but a warlike wind, a sharp salt breath That bites and wounds not; death nor life of mine Shall give to death or lordship of strange kings The soul of this live city, nor their heel Bruise her dear brow discrowned, nor snaffle or goad Wound her free mouth or stain her sanguine side Yet masterless of man; so bid thy lord Learn ere he weep to learn it, and too late Gnash teeth that could not fasten on her flesh, And foam his life out in dark froth of blood Vain as a wind's waif of the loud- mouthed sea, Torn from the wave's edge whitening. Tell him this; Though thrice his might were mustered for our scathe And thicker set with fence of thorn- edged spears Than sands are whirled about the win- tering beach When storms have swoln the rivers, and their blasts Have breached the broad sea-banks with stress of sea, That waves of inland and the main make war As men that mix and grapple; though his ranks Were more to number than all wild- wood leaves The wind waves on the hills of all the world, Yet should the heart not faint, the head not fall, The breath not fail, of Athens. Say, the gods From lips that have no more on earth to say I have told thee this the last good news or ill That I shall speak in sight of earth and sun Or he shall hear and see them: for the next</p>	<p>That ear of his from tongue of mine may take Must be the first word spoken under- ground From dead to dead in darkness. Hence; make haste, Lest war's fleet foot be swifter than thy tongue, And I that part not to return again On him that comes not to depart away Be fallen before thee; for the time is full, And with such mortal hope as knows not fear I go this high last way to the end of all. <i>Chorus.</i> Who shall put a bridle in the mourner's lips to chasten them, Or seal up the fountains of his tears for shame? Song nor prayer nor prophecy shall slacken tears nor hasten them, Till grief be within him as a burnt- out flame; Till the passion be broken in his breast, And the might thereof molten into rest, And the rain of eyes that weep be dry, And the breath be stilled of lips that sigh. Death at last for all men is a harbor; yet they flee from it, Set sails to the storm-wind, and again to sea; Yet for all their labor no whit further shall they be from it, Nor longer, but wearier, shall their life's work be. And with anguish of travail until night Shall they steer into shipwreck out of sight, And with oars that break and shrouds that strain Shall they drive whence no ship steers again. Bitter and strange is the word of the god most high, And steep the strait of his way.</p>
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Through a pass rock-rimmed and narrow
 the light that gleams
 On the faces of men fails faint as the
 dawn of dreams,
 The dayspring of death as a star in an
 under sky
 Where night is the dead men's day.
 As darkness and storm is his will that
 on earth is done,
 As a cloud is the face of his strength.
 King of kings, holiest of holies, and
 mightiest of might,
 Lord of the lords of thine heaven that
 are humble in thy sight,
 Hast thou set not an end for the path
 of the fires of the sun,
 To appoint him a rest at length?
 Hast thou told not by measure the
 waves of the waste wide sea,
 And the ways of the wind their master
 and thrall to thee?
 Hast thou filled not the furrows
 with fruit for the world's increase?
 Has thine ear not heard from of old, or
 thine eye not read
 The thought and the deed of us living,
 the doom of us dead?
 Hast thou made not war upon
 earth, and again made peace?
 Therefore, O father, that seest us whose
 lives are a breath,
 Take off us thy burden, and give us
 not wholly to death.
 For lovely is life, and the law
 wherein all things live,
 And gracious the season of each, and
 the hour of its kind,
 And precious the seed of his life in a
 wise man's mind;
 But all save life for his life will a
 base man give.
 But a life that is given for the life of
 the whole live land,
 From a heart unspotted a gift of a
 spotless hand,
 Of pure will perfect and free, for the
 land's life's sake,
 What man shall fear not to put forth
 his hand and take?
 For the fruit of a sweet life plucked in
 its pure green prime
 On his hand who plucks is as blood, on
 his soul as crime.

With cursing ye buy not blessing, nor
 peace with strife,
 And the hand is hateful that chaffers
 with death for life.
 Hast thou heard, O my heart, and
 endurest
 The word that is said,
 What a garland by sentence found
 surest
 Is wrought for what head?
 With what blossomless flowerage of
 sea-foam and blood-colored foliage
 inwound
 It shall crown as a heifer's for slaughter
 the forehead for marriage un-
 crowned?
 How the veils and the wreaths that
 should cover
 The brows of the bride
 Shall be shed by the breath of
 what lover,
 And scattered aside?
 With a blast of the mouth of what
 bridegroom the crowns shall be
 cast from her hair,
 And her head by what altar made
 humble be left of them naked
 and bare?
 At a shrine unbeloved of a god unbe-
 holden a gift shall be given for
 the land,
 That its ramparts though shaken with
 clamor and horror of manifold
 waters may stand;
 That the crests of its citadels crowned
 and its turrets that thrust up their
 heads to the sun
 May behold him unblinded with dark-
 ness of waves overmastering
 their bulwarks begun.
 As a bride shall they bring her,
 a prey for the bridegroom, a
 flower for the couch of her
 lord;
 They shall muffle her mouth that she
 cry not or curse them, and cover
 her eyes from the sword.
 They shall fasten her lips as with bit
 and with bridle, and darken the
 light of her face,
 That the soul of the slayer may not
 falter, his heart be not molten,
 his hand give not grace.

If she weep then, yet may none that
 hear take pity;
 If she cry not, none should hearken
 though she cried.
 Shall a virgin shield thine head for
 love, O city,
 With a virgin's blood anointed as
 for pride?
 Yet we held thee dear and hallowed
 of her favor,
 Dear of all men held thy people
 to her heart;
 Nought she loves the breath of blood,
 the sanguine savor,
 Who hath built with us her throne
 and chosen her part.

 Bloodless are her works, and
 sweet
 All the ways that feel her feet;
 From the empire of her eyes
 Light takes life, and darkness flies;
 From the harvest of her hands
 Wealth strikes root in prosperous
 lands;
 Wisdom of her word is made;
 At her strength is strength afraid;
 From the beam of her bright spear
 War's fleet foot goes back for fear;
 In her shrine she reared the birth
 Fire-begotten on live earth;
 Glory from her helm was shed
 On his olive-shadowed head;
 By no hand but his shall she
 Scourge the storms back of the sea,
 To no fame but his shall give
 Grace, being dead, with hers to
 live,
 And in double name divine
 Half the godhead of their shrine.
 But now with what word, with what
 woe may we meet
 The timeless passage of piteous feet,
 Hither that bend to the last way's end
 They shall walk upon earth?
 What song be rolled for a bride black-
 stoled
 And the mother whose hand of her
 hand hath hold?
 For anguish of heart is my soul's
 strength broken,
 And the tongue sealed fast that would
 fain have spoken,

 To behold thee, O child of so bitter a
 birth
 That we counted so sweet,
 What way thy steps to what bride-
 feast tend,
 What gift he must give that shall wed
 thee for token
 If the bridegroom be goodly to greet.
Chthonia. People, old men of my
 city, lordly wise and hoar of head,
 I, a spouseless bride, and crownless but
 with garlands of the dead,
 From the fruitful light turn silent to
 my dark unchilded bed.
Chorus. Wise of word was he too
 surely, but with deadlier wisdom
 wise,
 First who gave thee name from under
 earth, no breath from upper skies,
 When, foredoomed to this day's dark-
 ness, their first daylight filled
 thine eyes.
Praxithea. Child, my child that wast,
 and art but death's and now no
 more of mine,
 Half my heart is cloven with anguish
 by the sword made sharp for
 thine,
 Half exalts its wing for triumph, that
 I bare thee thus divine.
Chthonia. Though for me the sword's
 edge thirst that sets no point
 against thy breast,
 Mother, O my mother, where I drank
 of life and fell on rest,
 Thine, not mine, is all the grief that
 marks this hour accurst and
 blest.
Chorus. Sweet thy sleep and sweet
 the bosom was that gave thee
 sleep and birth;
 Harder now the breast, and girded with
 no marriage-band for girth,
 Where thine head shall sleep, the name-
 child of the lords of under earth.
Praxithea. Dark the name and dark
 the gifts they gave thee, child, in
 childbirth were,
 Sprung from him that rent the womb
 of earth, a bitter seed to bear,
 Born with groanings of the ground that
 gave him way toward heaven's
 dear air.

Chthonia. Day to day makes answer,
 first to last, and life to death;
 but I,
 Born for death's sake, die for life's
 sake, if indeed this be to die,
 This my doom that seals me deathless
 till the springs of time run dry.

Chorus. Children shalt thou bear to
 memory, that to man shalt bring
 forth none;
 Yea, the lordliest that lift eyes and
 hearts and songs to meet the
 sun,
 Names to fire men's ears like music till
 the round world's race be run.

Praxithea. I thy mother, named of
 gods that wreak revenge and
 brand with blame,
 Now for thy love shall be loved as thou,
 and famous with thy fame,
 While this city's name on earth shall
 be for earth her mightiest name.

Chthonia. That I may give this poor
 girl's blood of mine
 Scarce yet sun-warmed with summer,
 this thin life
 Still green with flowerless growth of
 seedling days,
 To build again my city; that no drop
 Fallen of these innocent veins on the
 cold ground
 But shall help knit the joints of her
 firm walls
 To knead the stones together, and
 make sure
 The band about her maiden girdlestead
 Once fastened, and of all men's violent
 hands
 Inviolable forever, — these to me
 Were no such gifts as crave no thanks-
 giving,
 If with one blow dividing the sheer
 life
 I might make end, and one pang wind
 up all,
 And seal mine eyes from sorrow; for
 such end
 The gods give none they love not; but
 my heart,
 That leaps up lightened of all sloth or
 fear
 To take the sword's point, yet with one
 thought's load

Flags, and falls back, broken of wing,
 that halts
 Maimed in mid flight for thy sake, and
 borne down,
 Mother, that in the places where I
 played
 An arm's-length from thy bosom and
 no more
 Shalt find me never, nor thine eye wax
 glad
 To mix with mine its eyesight, and for
 love
 Laugh without word, filled with sweet
 light, and speak
 Divine dumb things of the inward
 spirit and heart,
 Moved silently; nor hand or lip again
 Touch hand or lip of either, but for
 mine
 Shall thine meet only shadows of swift
 night,
 Dreams and dead thoughts of dead
 things; and the bed
 Thou strewedst, a sterile place for all
 time, strewn
 For my sleep only, with its void sad
 sheets
 Shall vex thee, and the unfruitful cover-
 lid
 For empty days reproach me dead, that
 leave
 No profit of my body, but am gone
 As not one worth being born to bear
 no seed,
 A sapless stock and branchless; yet
 thy womb
 Shall want not honor of me, that
 brought forth
 For all this people freedom, and for
 earth
 From the unborn city born out of my
 blood
 To light the face of all men ever-
 more
 Glory; but lay thou this to thy great
 heart
 Whereunder in the dark of birth con-
 ceived
 Mine unlit life lay girdled with the
 zone
 That bound thy bridal bosom; set this
 thought
 Against all edge of evil as a sword

To beat back sorrow, that for all the
 world
 Thou brought'st me forth a savior, who
 shall save
 Athens; for none but I, from none but
 thee,
 Shall take this death for garland; and
 the men
 Mine unknown children of unsounded
 years,
 My sons unrisen shall rise up at thine
 hand,
 Sown of thy seed to bring forth seed
 to thee,
 And call thee most of all most fruitful
 found
 Blessed; but me too for my barren
 womb,
 More than my sisters for their children
 born,
 Shall these give honor, yea in scorn's
 own place
 Shall men set love, and bring for mock-
 ery praise,
 And thanks for curses; for the dry
 wild vine,
 Scoffed at and cursed of all men, that
 was I,
 Shall shed them wine to make the
 world's heart warm,
 That all eyes seeing may lighten, and
 all ears
 Hear and be kindled; such a draught
 to drink
 Shall be the blood that bids this dust
 bring forth,
 The chalice life here spilt on this
 mine earth,
 Mine, my great father's mother; whom
 I pray
 Take me now gently, tenderly take
 home,
 And softly lay in his my cold chaste
 hand
 Who is called of men by my name,
 being of gods
 Charged only and chosen to bring men
 under earth,
 And now must lead and stay me with
 his staff,
 A silent soul led of a silent god,
 Toward sightless things led sightless;
 and on earth

I see now but the shadow of mine end,
 And this last light of all for me in
 heaven.
Praxithea. Farewell I bid thee; so
 bid thou not me,
 Lest the gods hear and mock us: yet
 on these
 I lay the weight not of this grief, nor
 cast
 Ill words for ill deeds back; for if one
 say
 They have done men wrong, what hurt
 have they to hear,
 Or he what help to have said it? surely,
 child,
 If one among men born might say it
 and live
 Blameless, none more than I may, who
 being vexed
 Hold yet my peace; for now through
 tears enough
 Mine eyes have seen the sun that from
 this day
 Thine shall see never more; and in the
 night
 Enough has blown of evil, and mine
 ears
 With wail enough the winds have filled,
 and brought
 Too much of cloud from over the sharp
 sea
 To mar for me the morning; such a
 blast
 Rent from these wide void arms and
 helpless breast
 Long since one graft of me disbranched,
 and bore
 Beyond the wild ways of the unwan-
 dered world,
 And loud wastes of the thunder-
 throated sea,
 Springs of the night and openings of
 the heaven,
 The old garden of the Sun; whence
 never more
 From west or east shall winds bring
 back that blow
 From folds of opening heaven or founts
 of night
 The flower of mine once ravished, born
 my child
 To bear strange children; nor on wings
 of theirs

Shall comfort come back to me, nor their sire	Laugh itself open with the lips that reach
Breathe help upon my peril, nor his strength	Lovingly toward a fount more loving; these
Raise up my weakness; but of gods and men	Death makes as all good lesser things now dead,
I drift unsteered on ruin, and the wave Darkens my head with imminent height, and hangs	And all the latter hopes that flowered from these,
Dumb, filled too full with thunder that shall leave	And fall as these fell fruitless; no joy more
These ears death-deafened when the tide finds tongue,	Shall man take of thy maidenhood, no tongue
And all its wrath bears on them; thee, O child,	Praise it; no good shall eyes get more of thee
I help not, nor am holpen; fain, ah fain,	That lightened for thy love's sake. Now, take note,
More than was ever mother born of man,	Give ear, O all ye people, that my word
Were I to help thee; fain beyond all prayer,	May pierce your hearts through, and the stroke that cleaves
Beyond all thought fain to redeem thee, torn	Be fruitful to them; so shall all that hear
More timeless from me sorrowing than the dream	Grow great at heart with child of thought most high,
That was thy sister; so shalt thou be too,	And bring forth seed in season; this my child,
Thou but a vision, shadow-shaped of sleep,	This flower of this my body, this sweet life,
By grief made out of nothing; now but once	This fair live youth I give you, to be slain,
I touch, but once more hold thee, one more kiss	Spent, shed, poured out, and perish; take my gift,
This last time, and none other ever more,	And give it death and the under gods who crave
Leave on thy lips, and leave them. Go. Thou wast	So much for that they give; for this is more,
My heart, my heart's blood, life-blood of my life,	Much more is this than all we; for they give
My child, my nursing: now this breast once thine	Freedom, and for a blast, an air-of breath,
Shall rear again no children; never now	A little soul that is not, they give back Light for all eyes, cheer for all hearts, and life
Shall any mortal blossom born like thee	That fills the world's width full of fame and praise
Lie there, nor ever with small silent mouth	And mightier love than children's. This they give,
Draw the sweet springs dry for an hour that feed	The grace to make thy country great, and wrest
The blind blithe life that knows not; never head	From time and death power to take hold on her,
Rest here to make these cold veins warm, nor eye	And strength to scathe forever; and this gift,

Is this no more than man's love is or mine,	Not one but three, for this one thin-spun thread
Mine and all mothers'? nay, where that seems more,	A threefold band of children would I give
Where one loves life of child, wife, father, friend,	For this land's love's sake; for whose love to-day
Son, husband, mother, more than this, even there	I bid thee, child, fare deathward and farewell.
Are all these lives worth nothing, all loves else	<i>Chorus.</i> O wofullest of women, yet of all
With this love slain and buried, and their tomb	Happiest, thy word be hallowed; in all time
A thing for shame to spit on; for what love	Thy name shall blossom, and from strange new tongues
Hath a slave left to love with? or the heart	High things be spoken of thee; for such grace
Base-born and bound in bondage fast to fear,	The gods have dealt to no man, that on none
What should it do to love thee? what hath he,	Have laid so heavy sorrow. From this day
The man that hath no country? Gods nor men	Live thou assured of godhead in thy blood,
Have such to friend, yoked beast-like to base life,	And in thy fate no lowlier than a god
Vile, fruitless, grovelling at the foot of death,	In all good things and evil; such a name Shall be thy child this city's, and thine own
Landless and kinless thralls of no man's blood,	Next hers that called it Athens. Go now forth
Unchilded and unmothered, abject limbs	Blest, and grace with thee to the doors of death.
That breed things abject; but who loves on earth	<i>Chthonia.</i> O city, O glory of Athens, O crown of my father's land, farewell.
Not friend, wife, husband, father, mother, child,	<i>Chorus.</i> For welfare is given her of thee.
Nor loves his own life for his own land's sake,	<i>Chthonia.</i> O goddess, be good to thy people, that in them dominion and freedom may dwell.
But only this thing most, more this than all,	<i>Chorus.</i> Turn from us the strengths of the sea.
He loves all well, and well of all is loved,	<i>Chthonia.</i> Let glory's and theirs be one name in the mouths of all nations made glad with the sun.
And this love lives forever. See now, friends,	<i>Chorus.</i> For the cloud is blown back with thy breath.
My countrymen, my brothers, with what heart	<i>Chthonia.</i> With the long last love of mine eyes I salute thee, O land where my days now are done.
I give you this that of your hands again The gods require for Athens: as I give,	<i>Chorus.</i> But her life shall be born of thy death.
So give ye to them what their hearts would have	<i>Chthonia.</i> I put on me the darkness thy shadow, my mother, and symbol, O Earth, of my name.
Who shall give back things better; yea, and these	
I take for me to witness, all these gods, Were their great will more grievous than it is,	

- Chorus.* For thine was her witness
from birth.
- Chthonia.* In thy likeness I come to
thee darling, a daughter whose
dawn and her even are the same.
- Chorus.* Be thine heart to her gra-
cious, O Earth!
- Chthonia.* To thine own kind be kindly,
for thy son's name's sake.
- Chorus.* That sons unborn may praise
thee and thy first-born son.
- Chthonia.* Give me thy sleep, who give
thee all my life awake.
- Chorus.* Too swift a sleep, ere half
the web of day be spun.
- Chthonia.* Death brings the shears or
ever life wind up the web.
- Chorus.* Their edge is ground and
sharpened: who shall stay his
hand?
- Chthonia.* The web is thin, a small
short life, with no thread left.
- Chorus.* Yet hath it strength,
stretched out, to shelter all the
land.
- Chthonia.* Too frail a tent for covering,
and a screen too strait.
- Chorus.* Yet broad enough for buck-
ler shall thy sweet life be.
- Chthonia.* A little bolt to bar off bat-
tle from the gate.
- Chorus.* A wide sea-wall, that shat-
ters the besieging sea.
- Chthonia.* I lift up mine eyes from
the skirts of the shadow,
From the border of death to the limits
of light;
- O streams and rivers of mountain and
meadow
That hallow the last of my sight,
O father that wast of my mother,
Cephisus, O thou too his brother
From the bloom of whose banks as
a prey
Winds harried my sister away,
O crown on the world's head lying
Too high for its waters to drown,
Take yet this one word of me dying,
O city, O crown!
- Though land-wind and sea-wind with
mouths that blow slaughter
Should gird them to battle against
thee again,
- New-born of the blood of a maiden thy
daughter,
The rage of their breath shall be
vain.
For their strength shall be quenched
and made idle,
And the foam of their mouths find a
bridle,
And the height of their heads bow
down
At the foot of the towers of the
town.
Be blest and beloved as I love thee
Of all that shall draw from thee
breath;
Be thy life as the sun's is above thee:
I go to my death.
- Chorus.* Many loves of many a mood
and many a kind
Fill the life of man, and mould the
secret mind;
Many days bring many dooms, to loose
and bind;
Sweet is each in season, good the gift
it brings,
Sweet as change of night and day with
altering wings,
Night that lulls world-weary day, day
that comforts night,
Night that fills our eyes with sleep, day
that fills with light.
None of all is lovelier, loftier love is
none,
Less is bride's for bridegroom, moth-
er's less for son,
Child, than this that crowns and binds
up all in one;
Love of thy sweet light, thy fostering
breast and hand,
Mother Earth, and city chosen, and
natural land;
Hills that bring the strong streams forth,
heights of heavenlier air,
Fields aflower with winds and suns,
woods with shadowing hair.
But none of the nations of men shall
they liken to thee,
Whose children true-born and the fruit
of thy body are we.
The rest are thy sons but in figure, in
word are thy seed;
We only the flower of thy travail, thy
children indeed.

Of thy soil hast thou fashioned our
limbs, of thy waters their blood,
And the life of thy springs everlasting
is fount of our flood.
No wind oversea blew us hither adrift
on thy shore,
None sowed us by land in thy womb
that conceived us and bore.
But the stroke of the shaft of the sun-
light that brought us to birth
Pierced only and quickened thy furrows
to bear us, O Earth!
With the beams of his love wast thou
cloven as with iron or fire,
And the life in thee yearned for his life,
and grew great with desire.
And the hunger and thirst to be
wounded and healed with his
dart
Made fruitful the love in thy veins and
the depth of thine heart.
And the showers out of heaven over-
flowing and liquid with love
Fulfilled thee with child of his god-
head as rain from above.
Such desire had ye twain of each other,
till molten in one
Ye might bear and beget of your bodies
the fruits of the sun.
And the trees in their season brought
forth and were kindled anew
By the warmth of the moisture of mar-
riage, the child-bearing dew.
And the firstlings were fair of the wed-
lock of heaven and of earth;
All countries were bounteous with blos-
som and bourgeon of birth,
Green pastures of grass for all cattle,
and life-giving corn;
But here of thy bosom, here only, the
man-child was born.
All races but one are as aliens ingrafted
or sown,
Strange children and changelings; but
we, O our mother, thine own.
Thy nurslings are others, and seedlings
they know not of whom;
For these hast thou fostered, but us
thou hast borne in thy womb.
Who is he of us all, O beloved, that
owe thee for birth,
Who would give not his blood for his
birth's sake, O mother, O Earth?

What landsman is he that was fos-
tered and reared of thine hand
Who may vaunt him as we may in
death though he die for the land?
Well doth she therefore who gives thee
in guerdon
The bloom of the life of thy giving;
And thy body was bowed by no fruitless
burden,
That bore such fruit of thee living.
For her face was not darkened for
fear,
For her eyelids conceived not a tear,
Nor a cry from her lips craved pity;
But her mouth was a fountain of song,
And her heart as a citadel strong
That guards the heart of the city
Messenger. High things of strong-
souled men that loved their land
On brass and stone are written, and
their deeds
On high days chanted; but none graven
or sung
That ever set men's eyes or spirits on
fire,
Athenians, has the sun's height seen, or
earth
Heard in her depth reverberate as from
heaven,
More worth men's praise and good re-
port of gods
Than here I bring for record in your
ears.
For now being come to the altar, where
as priest
Death ministering should meet her, and
his hand
Seal her sweet eyes asleep, the maiden
stood,
With light in all her face as of a bride
Smiling, or shine of festal flame by
night
Far flung from towers of triumph; and
her lips
Trembled with pride in pleasure, that
no fear
Blanched them nor death before his
time drank dry
The blood whose bloom fulfilled them;
for her cheeks
Lightened, and brighter than a bridal
veil

Her hair enrobed her bosom, and en-rolled
 From face to feet the body's whole soft length
 As with a cloud sun-saturate; then she spake
 With maiden tongue words manlike, but her eyes
 Lit mildly like a maiden's: *Country-men,*
With more good-will and height of happier heart
I give me to you than my mother bare,
And go more gladly this great way to death
Than young men bound to battle. Then with face
 Turned to the shadowiest part of all the shrine,
 And eyes fast set upon the further shade,
Take me, dear gods; and as some form had shone
 From the deep hollow shadow, some god's tongue
 Answered, *I bless you that your guardian grace*
Gives me to guard this country, takes my blood,
Your child's by name, to heal it. Then the priest
 Set to the flower-sweet snow of her soft throat
 The sheer knife's edge that severed it, and loosed
 From the fair bondage of so spotless flesh
 So strong a spirit; and all that girt them round,
 Gazing, with souls that hung on that sad stroke,
 Groaned, and kept silence after while a man
 Might count how far the fresh blood crept, and bathed
 How deep the dark robe and the bright shrine's base
 Red-rounded with a running ring that grew
 More large and dusker as the wells that fed
 Were drained of that pure effluence. But the queen

Groaned not nor spake nor wept, but as a dream
 Floats out of eyes awakening, so passed forth
 Ghost-like, a shadow of sorrow, from all sight,
 To the inner court and chamber where she sits
 Dumb, till word reach her of this whole day's end.
Chorus. More hapless born by far
 Beneath some wintrier star,
 One sits in stone among high Lydian snows,
 The tomb of her own woes:
 Yet happiest was once of the daughters of gods,
 and divine by her sire and her lord,
 Ere her tongue was a shaft for the hearts of her sons,
 for the heart of her husband a sword.
 For she, too great of mind,
 Grown through her good things blind,
 With godless lips and fire of her own breath
 Spake all her house to death;
 But thou, no mother unmothered, nor kindled in spirit with pride of thy seed,
 Thou hast hallowed thy child for a blameless blood-offering,
 and ransomed thy race by thy deed.
Messenger. As flower is grafted or flower, so grief on grief
 Engrafted brings forth new blossoms of strange tears,
 Fresh buds and green fruits of an alien pain;
 For now flies rumor on a dark wide wing,
 Murmuring of woes more than ye knew, most like
 Hers whom ye hailed most wretched; for the twain
 Last left of all this house that wore last night
 A threefold crown of maidens, and to-day
 Should let but one fall dead out of the wreath,
 If mad with grief we know not, and sore love

For this their sister, or with shame
 soul-stung
 To outlive her dead, or doubt lest their
 lives too
 The gods require to seal their country
 safe,
 And bring the oracular doom to perfect
 end,
 Have slain themselves, and fallen at
 the altar-foot
 Lie by their own hands done to death;
 and fear
 Shakes all the city as winds a wintering
 tree,
 And as dead leaves are men's hearts
 blown about
 And shrunken with ill thoughts, and
 flowerless hopes
 Parched up with presage, lest the pit-
 eous blood
 Shed of these maidens guiltless fall and fix
 On this land's forehead like a curse that
 cleaves
 To the unclean soul's inexpectate hunted
 head
 Whom his own crime tracks hotter
 than a hound
 To life's veiled end unsleeping; and
 this hour
 Now blackens toward the battle that
 must close
 All gates of hope and fear on all their
 hearts
 Who tremble toward its issue, knowing
 not yet
 If blood may buy them surety, cleanse
 or soil
 The helpless hands men raise, and reach
 no stay.
Chorus. Ill thoughts breed fear, and
 fear ill words; but these
 The gods turn from us that have kept
 their law.
 Let us lift up the strength of our
 hearts in song,
 And our souls to the height of the
 darkling day.
 If the wind in our eyes blow blood
 for spray,
 Be the spirit that breathes in us life
 more strong,
 Though the prow reel round, and the
 helm point wrong,

And sharp reefs whiten the shore-
 ward way.
 For the steersman Time sits hidden
 astern,
 With dark hand plying the rudder
 of doom,
 And the surf-smoke under it flies
 like fume
 As the blast shears off and the oar-
 blades churn
 The foam of our lives that to death
 return,
 Blown back as they break to the
 gulping gloom.
 What cloud upon heaven is arisen,
 what shadow, what sound,
 From the world beyond earth, from
 the night underground,
 That scatters from wings un beholden the
 weight of its darkness around?
 For the sense of my spirit is broken,
 and blinded its eye,
 As the soul of a sick man ready to
 die,
 With fear of the hour that is on me,
 with dread if an end be not nigh.
 O Earth, O gods of the land, have
 ye heart now to see and to hear
 What slays with terror mine eye-
 sight, and seals mine ear?
 O fountains of streams everlasting, are
 all ye not shrunk up and withered
 for fear?
 Lo, night is arisen on the noon, and
 her hounds are in quest by day,
 And the world is fulfilled of the
 noise of them crying for their
 prey,
 And the sun's self stricken in heaven-
 and cast out of his course as a
 blind man astray.
 From east to west of the south sea-
 line,
 Glitters the lightning of spears that
 shine;
 As a storm-cloud swoln that comes up
 from the skirts of the sea,
 By the wind for helmsman to shore-
 ward ferried,
 So black behind them the live storm
 serried
 Shakes earth with the tramp of its foot,
 and the terror to be.

Shall the sea give death whom the
 land gave birth?
 O Earth, fair mother, O sweet live
 Earth,
 Hide us again in thy womb from the
 waves of it, help us or hie.
 As a sword is the heart of the god
 thy brother,
 But thine as the heart of a new-made
 mother,
 To deliver thy sons from his ravin, and
 rage of his tide.
 O strong north wind, the pilot of
 cloud and rain,
 For the gift we gave thee what gift
 hast thou given us again?
 O god dark-winged, deep-throated, a ter-
 ror to forth-faring ships by night,
 What bride-song is this that is blown
 on the blast of thy breath?
 A gift but of grief to thy kinsmen, a
 song but of death,
 For the bride's folk weeping, and woe
 for her father, who finds thee
 against him in fight.
 Turn back from us, turn thy battle,
 take heed of our cry;
 Let thy dread breath sound, and the
 waters of war be dry;
 Let thy strong wrath shatter the strength
 of our foemen, the sword of their
 strength and the shield;
 As vapors in heaven, or as waves
 or the wrecks of ships,
 So break thou the ranks of their
 spears with the breath of thy lips,
 Till their corpses have covered and
 clothed as with raiment the face
 of the sword-ploughed field.
 O son of the rose-red morning, O
 god twin-born with the day,
 O wind with the young sun waking,
 and winged for the same wide
 way,
 Give up not the house of thy kin to
 the host thou hast marshalled
 from northward for prey.
 From the cold of thy cradle in
 Thrace, from the mists of the
 fountains of night,
 From the bride-bed of dawn whence
 day leaps laughing, on fire for
 his flight,
 Come down with their doom in thine
 hand on the ships thou hast
 brought up against us to fight.
 For now not in word but in deed is the
 harvest of spears begun,
 And its clamor outbellows the thunder,
 its lightning outlightens the sun.
 From the springs of the morning it
 thunders and lightens across
 and afar
 To the wave where the moonset ends,
 and the fall of the last low
 star.
 With a trampling of drenched red hoofs
 and an earthquake of men that
 meet,
 Strong War sets hand to the scythe, and
 the furrows take fire from his
 feet.
 Earth groans from her great rent heart,
 and the hollows of rocks are
 afraid,
 And the mountains are moved, and the
 valleys as waves in a storm-wind
 swayed.
 From the roots of the hills to the
 plain's dim verge and the dark
 loud shore,
 Air shudders with shrill spears cross-
 ing, and hurtling of wheels that
 roar.
 As the grinding of teeth in the jaws of
 a lion that foam as they gnash,
 Is the shriek of the axles that loosen,
 the shock of the poles that
 crash.
 The dense manes darken and glitter,
 the mouths of the mad steeds
 champ,
 Their heads flash blind through the
 battle, and death's foot rings in
 their tramp.
 For a fourfold host upon earth and in
 heaven is arrayed for the fight,
 Clouds ruining in thunder and armies
 encountering as clouds in the
 night.
 Mine ears are amazed with the terror
 of trumpets, with darkness mine
 eyes,
 At the sound of the sea's host charging
 that deafens the roar of the
 sky's.

White frontlet is dashed upon frontlet,
 and horse against horse reels
 hurled,
 And the gorge of the gulfs of the battle
 is wide for the spoil of the
 world.
 And the meadows are cumbered with
 shipwreck of chariots that found-
 er on land,
 And the horsemen are broken with
 breach as of breakers, and scatter-
 ed as sand.
 Through the roar and recoil of the
 charges that mingle their cries
 and confound,
 Like fire are the notes of the trumpets
 that flash through the darkness
 of sound.
 As the swing of the sea churned yellow
 that sways with the wind as it
 swells,
 Is the lift and relapse of the wave of
 the chargers that clash with their
 bells;
 And the clang of the sharp shrill brass
 through the burst of the wave as
 it shocks
 Rings clean as the clear winds cry
 through the roar of the surge on
 the rocks;
 And the heads of the steeds in their
 headgear of war, and their
 corseleted breasts,
 Gleam broad as the brows of the bil-
 lows that brighten the storm
 with their crests,
 Gleam dread as their bosoms that heave
 to the shipwrecking wind as they
 rise,
 Filled full of the terror and thunder of
 water, that slays as it dies.
 So dire is the glare of their fore-
 heads, so fearful the fire of their
 breath,
 And the light of their eyeballs en-
 kindled so bright with the light-
 nings of death;
 And the foam of their mouths as the
 sea's when the jaws of its gulf
 are as graves,
 And the ridge of their necks as the
 wind-shaken mane on the ridges
 of waves;

And their fetlocks afire as they rear
 drip thick with a dewfall of blood
 As the lips of the rearing breaker with
 froth of the man-slaying flood;
 And the whole plain reels and resounds
 as the fields of the sea by night
 When the stroke of the wind falls dark-
 ling, and death is the seafarer's
 light.
 But thou, fair beauty of heaven, dear
 face of the day nigh dead,
 What horror hath hidden thy glory, what
 hand hath muffled thine head?
 O sun, with what song shall we call
 thee, or ward off thy wrath by
 what name,
 With what prayer shall we seek to thee,
 soothe with what incense, as-
 suage with what gift,
 If thy light be such only as lightens to
 deathward the seaman adrift
 With the fire of his house for a
 beacon, that foemen have wasted
 with flame?
 Arise now, lift up thy light; give ear
 to us, put forth thine hand,
 Reach toward us thy torch of deliver-
 ance, a lamp for the night of the
 land.
 Thine eye is the light of the living,
 no lamp for the dead;
 Oh, lift up the light of thine eye on
 the dark of our dread!
 Who hath blinded thee? who hath
 prevailed on thee? who hath en-
 snared?
 Who hath broken thy bow, and the
 shafts for thy battle prepared?
 Have they found out a fetter to bind
 thee, a chain for thine arm that
 was bared?
 Be the name of thy conqueror set forth,
 and the might of thy master de-
 clared.
 O god, fair god of the morning, O
 glory of day,
 What ails thee to cast from thy fore-
 head its garland away?
 To pluck from thy temples their chap-
 let enwreathed of the light,
 And bind on the brows of thy god-
 head a frontlet of night?

Thou hast loosened the necks of thine
 horses, and goaded their flanks
 with affright,
 To the race of a course that we know
 not, on ways that are hid from
 our sight.
 As a wind through the darkness the
 wheels of their chariot are
 whirled,
 And the light of its passage is night
 on the face of the world.
 And there falls from the wings of thy
 glory no help from on high,
 But a shadow that smites us with fear
 and desire of thine eye.
 For our hearts are as reeds that a wind
 on the water bows down and
 goes by,
 To behold not thy comfort in heaven
 that hath left us untimely to die.
 But what light is it now leaps forth
 on the land
 Enkindling the waters and ways of
 the air
 From thy forehead made bare,
 From the gleam of thy bow-bearing
 hand?
 Hast thou set not thy right hand again
 to the string,
 With the back-bowed horns bent
 sharp for a spring
 And the barbed shaft drawn,
 Till the shrill steel sing, and the tense
 nerve ring,
 That pierces the heart of the dark
 with dawn,
 O huntsman, O king,
 When the flame of thy face hath twi-
 light in chase
 As a hound hath a blood-mottled fawn?
 He has glanced into golden the gray
 sea-strands,
 And the clouds are shot through with
 the fires of his hands,
 And the height of the hollow of
 heaven that he fills
 As the heart of a strong man is quick-
 ened and thrills;
 High over the folds of the low-lying
 lands,
 On the shadowless hills
 As a guard on his watch-tower he
 stands.

All earth and all ocean, all depth and
 all height,
 At the flash of an eyebeam are filled
 with his might:
 The sea roars backward, the storm
 drops dumb,
 And silence as dew on the fire of the
 fight
 Falls kind in our ears as his face in
 our sight
 With presage of peace to come.
 Fresh hope in my heart from the
 ashes of dread
 Leaps clear as a flame from the pyres
 of the dead,
 That joy out of woe
 May arise as the spring out of tempest
 and snow,
 With the flower-feasted month in her
 hands rose-red
 Borne soft as a babe from the bear-
 ing-bed.
 Yet it knows not indeed if a god be
 friend,
 If rescue may be from the rage of the
 sea,
 Or the wrath of its lord have
 end.
 For the season is full now of death
 or of birth,
 To bring forth life, or an end of all;
 And we know not if any thing stand
 or fall
 That is girdled about with the round
 sea's girth
 As a town with its wall;
 But thou that art highest of the gods
 most high,
 That art lord if we live, that art lord
 though we die,
 Have heed of the tongues of our ter-
 ror that cry
 For a grace to the children of Earth.
Athenian Herald. Sons of Athens,
 heavy-laden with the holy weight
 of years,
 Be your hearts as young men's lightened
 of their loathlier load of fears;
 For the wave is sunk whose thunder
 shoreward shook the shuddering
 lands,
 And unbreached of warring waters
 Athens like a sea-rock stands.

- Chorus.* Well thy word has cheered us, well thy face and glittering eyes, that spake
 Ere thy tongue spake words of comfort; yet no pause behoves it make
 Till the whole good hap find utterance that the gods have given at length.
- Athenian Herald.* All is this, that yet the city stands unforced by stranger strength.
- Chorus.* Sweeter sound might no mouth utter in man's ear than this thy word.
- Athenian Herald.* Feed thy soul then full of sweetness till some bitterer note be heard.
- Chorus.* None, if this ring sure, can mar the music fallen from heaven as rain.
- Athenian Herald.* If no fire of sun or star untimely sear the tender grain.
- Chorus.* Fresh the dewfall of thy tidings on our hopes reflowering lies.
- Athenian Herald.* Till a joyless shower and fruitless blight them, raining from thine eyes.
- Chorus.* Bitter springs have barren issues; these bedew grief's arid sands.
- Athenian Herald.* Such thank-offerings ask such altars as expect thy suppliant hands.
- Chorus.* Tears for triumph, wail for welfare, what strange godhead's shrine requires?
- Athenian Herald.* Death's or victory's be it, a funeral torch feeds all its festal fires.
- Chorus.* Like a star should burn the beacon flaming from our city's head.
- Athenian Herald.* Like a balefire should the flame go up that says the king is dead.
- Chorus.* Out of heaven, a wild-haired meteor, shoots this new sign, scattering fear.
- Athenian Herald.* Yea, the word has wings of fire that hovered, loath to burn thine ear.
- Chorus.* From thy lips it leapt forth loosened on a shrill and shadowy wing.
- Athenian Herald.* Long they faltered, fain to hide it deep as death that hides the king.
- Chorus.* Dead with him blind hope lies blasted by the lightning of one sword.
- Athenian Herald.* On thy tongue truth wars with error: no man's edge hath touched thy lord.
- Chorus.* False was thine then, jangling menace like a war-steed's brow-bound bell?
- Athenian Herald.* False it rang not joy nor sorrow; but by no man's hand he fell.
- Chorus.* Vainly then good news and evil through so faint a trumpet spake.
- Athenian Herald.* All too long thy soul yet labors, as who sleeping fain would wake,
 Waking, fain would fall on sleep again; the woe thou knowest not yet,
 When thou knowest, shall make thy memory thirst and hunger to forget.
- Chorus.* Long my heart has hearkened, hanging on thy clamorous ominous cry,
 Fain yet fearful of the knowledge whence it looks to live or die;
 Now to take the perfect presage of thy dark and sidelong flight
 Comes a surer soothsayer sorrowing, sable-stoled as birds of night.
- Praxithea.* Man, what thy mother bare thee born to say,
 Speak; for no word yet wavering on thy lip
 Can wound me worse than thought forestalls or fear.
- Athenian Herald.* I have no will to weave too fine or far,
 O queen, the web of sweet with bitter speech,
 Bright words with darkling; but the brief truth shown
 Shall plead my pardon for a lingering tongue,

<p>Loath yet to strike hope through the heart, and slay. The sun's light still was lordly housed in heaven When the twain fronts of war encountering smote First fire out of the battle; but not long Had the fresh wave of windy fight begun Heaving, and all the surge of swords to sway, When timeless night laid hold of heaven, and took With its great gorge the noon as in a gulf, Strangled; and thicker than the shrill-winged shafts Flew the fleet lightnings, held in chase through heaven By headlong heat of thunders on their trail Loosed as on quest of quarry; that our host, Smit with sick presage of some wrathful god, Quailed, but the foe as from one iron throat With one great sheer sole thousand-throated cry Shook earth, heart-staggered from their shout, and clove The eyeless hollow of heaven; and breached therewith As with an onset of strength-shattering sound, The rent vault of the roaring noon of night From her throned seat of usurpation rang Reverberate answer; such response there pealed As though the tide's charge of a storming sea Had burst the sky's wall, and made broad a breach In the ambient girth and bastion flanked with stars Guarding the fortress of the gods, and all Crashed now together on ruin; and through that cry, And higher above it, ceasing, one man's note</p>	<p>Tore its way like a trumpet: <i>Charge, make end,</i> <i>Charge, halt not, strike, rend up their strength by the roots,</i> <i>Strike, break them, make your birth-right's promise sure,</i> <i>Show your hearts hardier than the fenced land breeds,</i> <i>And souls breathed in you from no spirit of earth,</i> <i>Sons of the sea's waves!</i> And all ears that heard Rang with that fiery cry, that the fine air Thereat was fired, and kindling filled the plain Full of that fierce and trumpet-quenching breath That spake the clarions silent; no glad song For folk to hear that wist how dire a god Begat this peril to them, what strong race Fathered the sea-born tongue that sang them death, Threatening: so raged through the red foam of fight Poseidon's son Eumolpus; and the war Quailed round him coming, and our side bore back, As a stream thwarted by the wind and sea That meet it midway mouth to mouth, and beat The flood back of its issue; but the king Shouted against them, crying, <i>O Father-god,</i> <i>Source of the god my father, from thine hand</i> <i>Send me what end seems good now in thy sight,</i> <i>But death from mine to this man; and the word</i> Quick on his lips yet like a blast of fire Biew them together; and round its lords that met Paused all the reeling battle: two main waves Meeting, one hurled sheer from the sea-wall back</p>
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That shocks it sideways, one right in from sea	Stand, and take breath from battle; then too soon
Charging, that full in face takes at one blow	Saw sink down as a sunset in sea-mist The high bright head that here in van of the earth
That whole recoil and ruin, with less fear Startle men's eyes late shipwrecked; for a breath	Rose like a headland, and through storm and night
Crest fronting crest hung, wave to wave rose poised,	Took all the sea's wrath on it; and now dead
Then clashed, breaker to breaker; cloud with cloud	They bring thee back by war-forsaken ways
In heaven, chariot with chariot closed on earth,	The strength called once thy husband, the great guard
One fourfold flash and thunder; yet a breath,	That was of all men, stay of all men's lives.
And with the king's spear through his red heart's root	They bear him slain of no man, but a god,
Driven, like a rock split from its hill- side, fell	Godlike; and toward him dead the city's gates
Hurled under his own horsehoofs dead on earth	Fling their arms open mother-like, through him
The sea-beast that made war on earth from sea,	Saved; and the whole clear land is purged of war.
Dumb, with no shrill note left of storm- ing song,	What wilt thou say now of this weal and woe?
Eumolpus; and his whole host with one stroke	<i>Praxithea.</i> I praise the gods for Athens. O sweet Earth,
Spear-stricken through its dense deep iron heart	Mother, what joy thy soul has of thy son,
Fell hurtling from us, and in fierce re- coil	Thy life of my dead lord, mine own soul knows
Drew seaward as with one wide wail of waves,	That knows thee godlike; and what grief should mine,
Resorbed with reluctance; such a groan	What sorrow should my heart have, who behold
Rose from the fluctuant reflux of its ranks,	Thee made so heaven-like happy? This alone
Sucked sullen back and strengthless; but scarce yet	I only of all these blessed, all thy kind, Crave this for blessing to me, that in theirs
The steeds had sprung, and wheels had bruised their lord	Have but a part thus bitter; give me too
Fallen, when from highest height of the sundering heaven	Death, and the sight of eyes that meet not mine.
The Father for his brother's son's sake slain	And thee too from no godless heart or tongue
Sent a sheer shaft of lightning writhen, and smote	Reproachful, thee too by thy living name,
Right on his son's son's forehead, that unhelmed	Father divine, merciful god, I call, Spring of my life-springs, fountain of my stream,
Shone like the star that shines down storm, and gave	Pure and poured forth to one great end with thine,
Light to men's eyes that saw thy lord their king	

Sweet head sublime of triumph and
these tears,

Cephisus, if thou seest as gladly shed
Thy blood in mine as thine own waves
are given

To do this great land good, to give for
love

The same lips drink, and comfort the
same hearts,

Do thou then, O my father, white-
souled god,

To thy most pure earth-hallowing heart
eternè

Take what thou gavest to be given for
these,

Take thy child to thee; for her time is
full,

For all she hath borne she hath given,
seen all she had

Flow from her, from her eyes and
breasts and hands

Flow forth to feed this people; but be
thou,

Dear god and gracious to all souls
alive,

Good to thine own seed also; let me
sleep,

Father; my sleepless darkling day is
done,

My day of life like night, but slumber-
less:

For all my fresh fair springs, and his
that ran

In one stream's bed with mine, are all
run out

Into the deep of death. The gods
have saved

Athens; my blood has bought her at
their hand,

And ye sit safe; be glorious and be
glad

As now for all time always, country-
men,

And love my dead forever; but me,
me,

What shall man give for these so good
as death?

Chorus. From the cup of my heart I
pour through my lips along

The mingled wine of a joyful and sor-
rowful song;

Wine sweeter than honey and bitterer
than blood that is pured

From the chalice of gold, from the
point of the two-edged sword.

For the city redeemed should joy flow
forth as a flood,

And a dirge make moan for the city
polluted with blood.

Great praise should the gods have
surely, my country, of thee,

Were thy brow but as white as of old
for thy sons to see,

Were thy hands as bloodless, as blame-
less thy cheek divine;

But a stain on it stands of the life-blood
offered for thine.

What thanks shall we give that are
mixed not and marred with
dread

For the price that has ransomed thine
own with thine own child's head?

For a taint there cleaves to the peo-
ple redeemed with blood,

And a plague to the blood-red
hand.

The rain shall not cleanse it, the dew
nor the sacred flood

That blesses the glad live land.
In the darkness of earth beneath, in
the world without sun,

The shadows of past things reign;
And a cry goes up from the ghost of
an ill deed done,

And a curse for a virgin slain.

Athena. Hear, men that mourn, and
woman without mate,

Hearken; ye sick of soul with fear,
and thou

Dumb-stricken for thy children; hear
ye too,

Earth, and the glory of heaven, and
winds of the air,

And the most holy heart of the deep
sea,

Late wroth, now full of quiet; hear
thou, sun,

Rolled round with the upper fire of
rolling heaven,

And all the stars returning; hills and
streams,

Springs and fresh fountains, day that
seest these deeds,

Night that shalt hide not; and thou
child of mine,

Child of a maiden, by a maid redeemed,

Blood-guiltless, though bought back with innocent blood,	To hunt from sunset to the springs of the sun
City mine own: I Pallas bring thee word,	Kings that rose up out of the populous east
I virgin daughter of the most high god	To make their quarry of thee, and shall strew
Give all you charge, and lay command on all,	With multitudinous limbs of myriad herds
The word I bring be wasted not; for this	The foodless pastures of the sea, and make
The gods have stablished, and his soul hath sworn,	With wrecks immeasurable and un- summed defeat
That time nor earth nor changing sons of man,	One ruin of all their many-folded flocks Ill shepherded from Asia; by thy side
Nor waves of generations, nor the winds	Shall fight thy son the north wind, and the sea
Of ages risen and fallen that steer their tides	That was thine enemy shall be sworn thy friend
Through light and dark of birth and lovelier death	And hand be struck in hand of his and thine
From storm toward haven inviolable, shall see	To hold faith fast for aye; with thee, though each
So great a light alive beneath the sun	Make war on other, wind and sea shall keep
As the aweless eye of Athens; all fame else	Peace, and take truce as brethren for thy sake
Shall be to her fame as a shadow in sleep	Leagued with one spirit and single- hearted strength
To this wide noon at waking; men most praised	To break thy foes in pieces, who shall meet
In lands most happy for their children found	The wind's whole soul and might of the main sea
Shall hold as highest honors given of God	Full in their face of battle, and become A laughter to thee; like a shower of leaves
To be but likened to the least of thine, Thy least of all, my city; thine shall be	Shall their long galleys, rank by stagger- ing rank,
The crown of all songs sung, of all deeds done	Be dashed adrift on ruin, and in thy sight
Thine the full flower for all time; in thine hand	The sea deride them, and that lord of the air
Shall time be like a sceptre, and thine head	Who took by violent hand thy child to wife
Wear worship for a garland; nor one leaf	With his loud lips bemock them, by his breath
Shall change or winter cast out of thy crown	Swept out of sight of being; so great a grace
Till all flowers wither in the world; thine eyes	Shall this day give thee, that makes one in heart
Shall first in man's flash lightning lib- erty,	With mine the deep sea's godhead, and his son
Thy tongue shall first say freedom; thy first hand	With him that was thine helmsman, king with king,
Shall loose the thunder terror as a hound	

Dead man with dead; such only names
 as these
 Shalt thou call royal, take none else or
 less
 To hold of men in honor; but with me
 Shall these be worshipped as one god,
 and mix
 With mine the might of their mysterious
 names
 In one same shrine served singly, thence
 to keep
 Perpetual guard on Athens; time and
 change,
 Masters and lords of all men, shall be
 made
 To thee that knowest no master and no
 lord
 Servants; the days that lighten heaven,
 and nights
 That darken, shall be ministers of thine
 To attend upon thy glory, the great
 years
 As light-engraved letters of thy name
 Writ by the sun's hand on the front of
 the earth
 For world-beholden witness; such a
 gift
 For one fair chaplet of three lives en-
 wreathed
 To hang forever from thy storied shrine,
 And this thy steersman fallen with tiller
 in hand
 To stand forever at thy ship's helm seen,
 Shall he that bade their threefold flower
 be shorn
 And laid him low that planted, give
 thee back
 In sign of sweet land reconciled with
 sea
 And heavenlike earth with heaven:
 such promise-pledge
 I daughter without mother born of God
 To the most woful mother born of man
 Plight for continual comfort. Hail, and
 live

Beyond all human hap of mortal doom
 Happy; for so my sire hath sworn and
 I.

Praxithea. O queen Athena! from a
 heart made whole

Take as thou givest us blessing; never
 tear

Shall stain for shame, nor groan untune
 the song

That as a bird shall spread and fold its
 wings

Here in thy praise forever, and fulfil
 The whole world's crowning city
 crowned with thee

As the sun's eye fulfils and crowns with
 sight

The circling crown of heaven. There
 is no grief

Great as the joy to be made one in will:
 With him that is the heart and rule of
 life,

And thee, god born of god; thy name
 is ours,

And thy large grace more great than
 our desire.

Chorus. From the depth of the
 springs of my spirit a fountain
 is poured of thanksgiving,

My country, my mother, for thee,
 That thy dead for their death shall have
 life in thy sight and a name ever-
 living

At heart of thy people to be.

In the darkness of change on the waters
 of time they shall turn from afar

To the beam of this dawn for a beacon,
 the light of these pyres for a star.

They shall see thee who love and take
 comfort, who hate thee shall see
 and take warning,

Our mother that maketh us free;

And the sons of thine earth shall have
 help of the waves that made war
 on their morning,

And friendship and fame of the sea.

CHASTELARD: A TRAGEDY.

I DEDICATE THIS PLAY, AS A PARTIAL EXPRESSION OF REVERENCE AND GRATITUDE, TO THE CHIEF OF LIVING POETS; TO THE FIRST DRAMATIST OF HIS AGE; TO THE GREATEST EXILE, AND THEREFORE TO THE GREATEST MAN OF FRANCE; TO VICTOR HUGO.

PERSONS.

MARY STUART.	MARY HAMILTON.	RANDOLPH.
MARY BEATON.	PIERRE DE BOSCOSEL DE CHASTELARD.	MORTON.
MARY SEYTON.	DARNLEY.	LINDSAY.
MARY CARMICHAEL.	MURRAY.	FATHER BLACK.

Guards, Burgesses, a Preacher, Citizens, etc.

Another Yle is there toward the Northe, in the See Ocean, where that ben fulle cruele and ful evele Women of Nature: and thei han precious Stones in hire Eyen; and thei ben of that kynde, that zif they beholden ony man, thei sla him anon with the beheldyng, as dothe the Basilisk.

MAUNDEVILE'S *Voiage and Travails*, Ch. xxviii.

ACT I. MARY BEATON.

SCENE I.—*The Upper Chamber in Holyrood.*

The four MARIES.

Mary Beaton (*sings*):—

1.

*Le navire
Est à l'eau ;
Entends rire
Ce gros flot
Que fait luire
Et bruire
Le vieux sire
Aquila.*

2.

*Dans l'espace
Du grand air
Le vent passe
Comme un fer*

*Siffle et sonne,
Tombe et tonne,
Prend et donne
À la mer.*

3.

*Vois, la brise
Tourne au nord,
Et la bise
Souffle et mord
Sur la pure
Chevelure
Qui murmure
Et se tord.*

Mary Hamilton. You never sing now
but it makes you sad ;
Why do you sing ?
Mary Beaton. I hardly know well
why ;
It makes me sad to sing, and very sad
To hold my peace.

- Mary Carmichael.* I know what saddens you.
- Mary Beaton.* Prithce, what? what?
- Mary Carmichael.* Why, since we came from France.
- You have no lover to make stuff for us.
- Mary Beaton.* You are wise; for there my pain begins indeed.
- Because I have no lovers but of France.
- Mary Seyton.* I mind me of one Olivier de Pesme,
- (You knew him, sweet) a pale man with short hair,
- Wore tied at sleeve the Beaton color.
- Mary Carmichael.* Blue —
- I know, blue scarfs. I never liked that knight.
- Mary Hamilton.* Me? I know him? I hardly knew his name.
- Black, was his hair? no, brown.
- Mary Seyton.* Light pleases you:
- I have seen the time brown served you well enough.
- Mary Carmichael.* Lord Darnley's is a mere maid's yellow.
- Mary Hamilton.* No;
- A man's, good color.
- Mary Seyton.* Ah, does that burn your blood?
- Why, what a bitter color is this red
- That fills your face! if you be not in love,
- I am no maiden.
- Mary Hamilton.* Nay, God help true hearts!
- I must be stabbed with love then, to the bone,
- Yea, to the spirit, past cure.
- Mary Seyton.* What were you saying?
- I see some jest run up and down your lips.
- Mary Carmichael.* Finish your song;
- I know you have more of it;
- Good sweet, I pray you do.
- Mary Beaton.* I am too sad.
- Mary Carmichael.* This will not sadden you to sing; your song
- Tastes sharp of sea and the sea's bitterness,
- But small pain sticks on it.
- Mary Beaton.* Nay, it is sad;
- For either sorrow with the beaten lips
- Sings not at all, or if it does get breath
- Sings quack and sharp like a hard sort of mirth:
- And so this song does; or I would it did,
- That it might please me better than it does.
- Mary Seyton.* Well, as you choose then.
- What a sort of men
- Crowd all about the squares!
- Mary Carmichael.* Ay, hateful men;
- For look how many talking mouths be there,
- So many angers show their teeth at us.
- Which one is that, stooped somewhat in the neck,
- That walks so with his chin against the wind,
- Lips sideways shut? a keen-faced man — lo there,
- He that walks midmost.
- Mary Seyton.* That is Master Knox.
- He carries all these folk within his skin,
- Bound up as 'twere between the brows of him
- Like a bad thought; their hearts beat inside his;
- They gather at his lips like flies in the sun,
- Thrust sides to catch his face.
- Mary Carmichael.* Look forth; so — push
- The window — further — see you any thing?
- Mary Hamilton.* They are well gone;
- but pull the lattice in,
- The wind is like a blade aslant. Would God
- I could get back one day I think upon;
- The day we four and some six after us
- Sat in that Louvre garden and plucked fruits
- To cast love-lots with in the gathered grapes;
- This way: you shut your eyes, and reach and pluck,
- And catch a lover for each grape you get.
- I got but one, a green one, and it broke
- Between my fingers, and it ran down through them.
- Mary Seyton.* Ay, and the queen fell in a little wrath
- Because she got so many, and tore off

Some of them she had plucked unwittingly —

She said, against her will. What fell to you?

Mary Beaton. Me? nothing but the stalk of a stripped bunch
With clammy grape-juice leavings at the tip.

Mary Carmichael. Ay, true, the queen came first, and she won all;
It was her bunch we took to cheat you with.

What, will you weep for that now? for you seem

As one that means to weep. God pardon me!

I think your throat is choking up with tears.

You are not well, sweet, for a lying jest
To shake you thus much.

Mary Beaton. I am well enough:
Give not your pity trouble for my sake.

Mary Seyton. If you be well, sing out your song and laugh,
Though it were but to fret the fellows there. —

Now shall we catch her secret washed and wet

In the middle of her song; for she must weep

If she sing through.

Mary Hamilton. I told you it was love;

I watched her eyes all through the masquing time

Feed on his face by morse's; she must weep.

Mary Beaton (sings): —

4.

*Le navire
Passe et suit,
Puis chavire
À grand bruit;
Et sur l'onde
La plus blonde
Tête au monde
Flotte et fuit.*

5.

*Moi, je rame,
Et l'amour*

*C'est ma flamme,
Mon grand jour,
Ma chandelle
Blanche et belle,
Ma chapelle
De séjour.*

6.

*Toi, mon âme
Et ma foi,
Sois ma dame
Et ma loi;
Sois ma mie,
Sois Marie,
Sois ma vie,
Toute à moi!*

Mary Seyton. I know the song; a song of Chastelard's

He made in coming over with the queen.
How hard it rained! he played that over twice,

Sitting before her, singing each word soft,

As if he loved the least she listened to.

Mary Hamilton. No marvel if he loved it for her sake;

She is the choice of women in the world,
Is she not, sweet?

Mary Beaton. I have seen no fairer one.

Mary Seyton. And the most loving:
did you note last night

How long she held him with her hands and eyes,

Looking a little sadly, and at last
Kissed him below the chin, and parted so

As the dance ended?

Mary Hamilton. This was courtesy;
So might I kiss my singing-bird's red bill

After some song, till he bit short my lip.

Mary Seyton. But if a lady hold her bird anights

To sing to her between her fingers — ha? I have seen such birds.

Mary Carmichael. Oh, you talk emptily;

She is full of grace; and marriage in good time

Will wash the fool called scandal off men's lips.

Mary Hamilton. I know not that; I know how folk would gibe

If *one* of us pushed courtesy so far,
She has always loved love's fash'ns
well: you wot.

The marshal, head friend of this Chaste-
lard's,

She used to talk with ere he brought
her here,

And sow their talk with little kisses
thick

As roses in rose-harvest. For myself,
I cannot see which side of her that
lurks

Which snares in such wise all the sense
of men;

What special beauty, subtle as man's
eye

And tender as the inside of the eyelid is,
There grows about her.

Mary Carmichael. I think her cun-
ning speech —

The soft and rapid shudder of her
breath

In talking — the rare, tender little
laugh —

The pitiful sweet sound like a bird's
sigh

When her voice breaks; her talking
does it all.

Mary Seyton. I say, her eyes with
those clear perfect brows:

It is the playing of those eyelashes,
The lure of amorous looks as sad as
love,

Plucks all souls toward her like a net.

Mary Hamilton. What, what!
You praise her in too lover-like a wise

For women that praise women; such
report

Is like robes worn the rough side next
the skin,

Frets where it warms.

Mary Seyton. You think too much in
French.

Enter DARNLEY.
Here comes your thorn; what glove
against it now?

Mary Hamilton. Oh, God's good pity!
this a thorn of mine?

It has not run deep in yet.

Mary Carmichael. I am not sure:
The red runs over to your face's edge.

Darnley. Give me one word; nay,
lady, for love's sake;

Here, come this way; I will not keep
you: no.

— O my sweet soul, why do you wrong
me thus?

Mary Hamilton. Why will you give
me for men's eyes to burn?

Darnley. What, sweet, I love you as
mine own soul loves me;

They shall divide when we do.

Mary Hamilton. I cannot say.

Darnley. Why, look you, I am broken
with the queen;

This is the rancor and the bitter heart
That grows in you, by God it is naught
else.

Why, this last night she held me for a
fool —

Ay, God wot, for a thing of stripe and
bell.

I bade her make me marshal in her
masque —

I had the dress here painted, gold and
gray

(That is, not gray, but a blue green like
this) —

She tells me she had chosen her mar-
shal, she,

The best o' the world for cunning and
sweet wit;

And what sweet fool but her sweet
knight, God help!

To serve her with that three-inch wit of
his?

She is all fool and fiddling now: for
me,

I am well pleased; God knows, if I
might choose

I would not be more troubled with her
love.

Her love is like a brier that rasps the
flesh,

And yours is soft like flowers. Come
this way, love;

So, further in this window: hark you
here.

Enter CHASTELARD.
Mary Beaton. Good morrow, sir.

Chastelard. Good morrow, noble lady.

Mary Carmichael. You have heard
no news? what news?

Chastelard. Nay, I have none.
That maiden-tongued male-faced Eliza-
beth

Hath eyes unlike our queen's, hair not
so soft,
And hands more sudden save for court-
esy;
And lips no kiss of love's could bring
to flower
In such red wise as our queen's; save
this news,
I know none English. .

Mary Seyton. Come, no news of her;
For God's love talk still rather of our
queen.

Mary Beaton. God give us grace then
to speak well of her.
You did right joyfully in our masque
last night;
I saw you when the queen lost breath
(her head
Bent back, her chin and lips catching
the air —
A goodly thing to see her) how you
smiled

Across her head, between your lips —
no doubt
You had great joy, sir. Did not you
take note
Once how one lock fell? that was good
to see.

Chastelard. Yea, good enough to live
for.

Mary Beaton. Nay, but sweet
Enough to die. When she broke off
the dance,
Turning round short and soft — I never
saw

Such supple ways of walking as she has.
Chastelard. Why do you praise her
gracious looks to me?

Mary Beaton. Sir, for mere sport;
but tell me even for love
How much you love her.

Chastelard. I know not: it may be
If I had set mine eyes to find that out,
I should not know it. She hath fair
eyes: may be

I love her for sweet eyes or brows or
hair,
For the smooth temples, where God
touching her

Made blue with sweeter veins the flower-
sweet white;

Or for the tender turning of her wrist,
Or marriage of the eyelid with the cheek;

I cannot tell; or flush of lifting throat,
I know not if the color get a name
This side of heaven — no man knows;
or her mouth,

A flower's lip with a snake's lip, sting-
ing sweet,
And sweet to sting with: face that one
would see

And then fall blind and die with sight
of it

Held fast between the eyelids — oh, all
these

And all her body and the soul to that,
The speech and shape and hand and
foot and heart

That I would die of — yea, her name
that turns

My face to fire being written — I know
no whit

How much I love them.

Mary Beaton. Nor how she loves you
back?

Chastelard. I know her ways of lov-
ing, all of them:

A sweet soft way the first is; afterward
It burns and bites like fire; the end of
that,

Charred dust, and eyelids bitten through
with smoke.

Mary Beaton. What has she done for
you to gird at her?

Chastelard. Nothing. You do not
greatly love her, you,
Who do not — gird, you call it. I am
bound to France;

Shall I take word from you to any one?
So it be harmless, not a gird, I will.

Mary Beaton. I doubt you will not
go hence with your life.

Chastelard. Why, who should slay
me? no man northwards born,
In my poor mind; my sword's lip is no
maid's

To fear the iron biting of their own,
Though they kiss hard for hate's sake.

Mary Beaton. Lo you, sir,
How sharp he whispers, what close
breath and eyes —

And hers are fast upon him, do you see?
Chastelard. Well, which of these must
take my life in hand?

Pray God it be the better: nay, which
hand?

Mary Beaton. I think, none such.
The man is goodly made;
She is tender-hearted toward his courtesies,
And would not have them fall too low to find.
Look, they slip forth.

[*Exeunt DARNLEY and MARY HAMILTON.*]

Mary Seyton. For love's sake, after them,
And soft as love can.

[*Exeunt MARY CARMICHAEL and MARY SEYTON.*]

Chastelard. True, a goodly man.
What shapeliness and state he hath,
what eyes,
Brave brow and lordly lip! were it not fit
Great queens should love him?

Mary Beaton. See you now, fair lord,
I have but scant breath's time to help myself,

And I must cast my heart out on a chance;

So bear with me. That we twain have loved well,

I have no heart nor wit to say; God wot
We had never made good lovers, you and I.

Look you, I would not have you love me, sir,

For all the love's sake in the world. I say,

You love the queen, and loving burns you up,

And mars the grace and joyous wit you had,

Turning your speech to sad, your face to strange,

Your mirth to nothing: and I am piteous, I,

Even as the queen is, and such women are;

And if I helped you to your love-longing,

Meseems some grain of love might fall my way,

And love's god help me when I came to love:

I have read tales of men that won their loves

On some such wise.

Chastelard. If you mean mercifully,

I am bound to you past thought and thank; if worse,
I will but thank your lips and not your heart.

Mary Beaton. Nay, let love wait, and praise me, in God's name,
Some day when he shall find me; yet, God wot,

My lips are of one color with my heart.
Withdraw now from me, and about midnight

In some close chamber without light or noise

It may be I shall get you speech of her;
She loves you well; it may be she will speak,

I wot not what; she loves you at her heart.

Let her not see that I have given you word,

Lest she take shame and hate her love.
Till night.

Let her not see it.

Chastelard. I will not thank you now,
And then I'll die what sort of death you will.

Farewell. [*Exit.*]

Mary Beaton. And by God's mercy and my love's

I will find ways to earn such thank of you. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. — *A Hall in the same.*

The QUEEN, DARNLEY, MURRAY, RANDOLPH, the MARIES, CHASTELARD, etc.

Queen. Hath no man seen my lord of Chastelard?

Nay, no great matter. Keep you on that side:

Begin the purpose.

Mary Carmichael. Madam, he is here.

Queen. Begin a measure now that other side.

I will not dance; let them play soft a little.

Fair sir, we had a dance to tread to-night,

To teach our north folk all sweet ways of France;

But at this time we have no heart to it.

Sit, sir, and talk. Look, this breast-clasp is new,
The French king sent it me.

Chastelard. A goodly thing:
But what device? the word is ill to catch.

Queen. A Venus crowned, that eats
the hearts of men:

Below her flies a love with a bat's wings,
And strings the hair of paramours to
bind

Live birds' feet with. Lo what small
subtle work:

The smith's name, Gian Crisostomo
da — what?

Can you read that? The sea froths
underfoot;

She stands upon the sea, and it curls up
In soft loose curls that run to one in
the wind.

But her hair is not shaken, there's a
fault;

It lies straight down in close-cut points
and tongues,

Not like blown hair. The legend is
writ small:

Still one makes out this — *Cave* — if
you look.

Chastelard. I see the Venus well
enough, God wot,

But nothing of the legend.

Queen. Come, fair lord,
Shall we dance now? my heart is good
again. [*They dance a measure.*]

Darnley. I do not like this manner of
a dance,

This game of two by two; it were much
better

To meet between the changes and to
mix

Than still to keep apart and whispering
Each lady out of earshot with her friend.

Mary Beaton. That's as the lady
serves her knight, I think:

We are broken up too much.

Darnley. Nay, no such thing;
Be not wroth, lady, I wot it was the
queen

Pricked each his friend out. Look you
now — your ear —

If love had gone by choosing — how
they laugh,

Lean lips together, and wring hands
underhand!

What, you look white too, sick of heart,
ashamed,

No marvel — for men call it — hark you
though — [*They pass.*]

Murray. Was the Queen found no
merrier in France?

Mary Hamilton. Why, have you seen
her sorrowful to-night?

Murray. I say not so much; blithe
she seems at whiles,

Gentle and goodly doubtless in all ways,
But hardly with such lightness and quick
heart

As it was said.

Mary Hamilton. 'Tis your great care
of her

Makes you misdoubt; naught else.

Murray. Yea, may be so;
She has no cause I know to sadden her.

[*They pass.*]
Queen. I am tired too soon; I could
have danced down hours

Two years gone hence, and felt no
wearier.

One grows much older northwards, my
fair lord;

I wonder men die south; meseems all
France

Smells sweet with living, and bright
breath of days

That keep men far from dying. Peace;
pray you now,

No dancing more. Sing, sweet, and
make us mirth;

We have done with dancing measures —
sing that song

You call the song of love at ebb.

Mary Beaton (sings).

1.

*Between the sunset and the sea
My love laid hands and lips on me:*

*Of sweet came sour, of day came night,
Of long desire came brief delight:*

*Ah, love, and what thing came of thee
Between the sea-downs and the sea?*

2.

*Between the sea-mark and the sea
Joy grew to grief, grief grew to me;*

*Love turned to tears, and tears to fire,
And dead delight to new desire;*

*Love's talk, love's touch there seemed to be
Between the sea-sand and the sea.*

3-

*Between the sundown and the sea
Love watched one hour of love with me;
Then down the all-golden water-ways
His feet flew after yesterdays;
I saw them come and saw them flee
Between the sea-foam and the sea.*

4-

*Between the sea-strand and the sea
Love fell on sleep, sleep fell on me;
The first star saw twain turn to one
Between the moonrise and the sun;
The next, that saw not love, saw me
Between the sea-banks and the sea.*

Queen. Lo, sirs,
What mirth is here! Some song of
yours, fair lord;
You know glad ways of rhyming — no
such tunes
As go to tears.

Chastelard. I made this yesterday;
For its love's sake I pray you let it
live. *[He sings.]*

1.

*Après tant de jours, après tant de pleurs,
Soyez secourable à mon âme en peine.
Voyez comme Avril fait l'amour aux
fleurs;
Dame d'amour, dame aux belles cou-
leurs,
Dieu vous a fait belle, Amour vous fait
reine.*

2.

*Rions, je l'en prie; aimons, je le veux.
Le temps fuit et rit et ne revient guère.
Pour baiser le bout de tes blonds cheveux,
Pour baiser tes cils, ta bouche et tes yeux;
L'amour n'a qu'un jour auprès de sa
mère.*

Queen. 'Tis a true song; love shall
not pluck time back,
Nor time lie down with love. For me,
I am old;

Have you no hair changed since you
changed to Scot?

I look each day to see my face drawn
up
About the eyes, as if they sucked the
cheeks.

I think this air and face of things here
north

Puts snow at flower-time in the blood,
and tears

Between the sad eyes and the merry
mouth

In their youth-days.

Chastelard. It is a bitter air.

Queen. Faith, if I might be gone, sir,
would I stay?

I think, for no man's love's sake.

Chastelard. I think not.

Queen. Do you not mind at landing
how the quay

Looked like a blind wet face in waste
of wind

And washing of wan waves? how the
hard mist

Made the hills ache? Your songs lied
loud, my knight:

They said my face would burn off cloud
and rain

Seen once, and fill the crannied land
with fire,

Kindle the capes in their blind black-
gray hoods —

I know not what. You praise me past
all loves;

And these men love me little; 'tis some
fault,

I think, to love me: even a fool's sweet
fault.

I have your verse still beating in my
head,

Of how the swallow got a wing broken
In the springtime, and lay upon his
side

Watching the rest fly off i' the red leaf-
time,

And broke his heart with grieving at
himself

Before the snow came. Do you know
that lord

With sharp-set eyes? and him with
huge thewed throat?

Good friends to me; I had need love
them well.

Why do you look one way? I will not have you
 Keep your eyes here: 'tis no great wit in me
 To care much now for old French friends of mine. —
 Come, a fresh measure; come, play well for me,
 Fair sirs, your playing puts life in foot and heart. —
Darnley. Lo you again, sirs, how she holds him fast — the supple way she hath!
 Your queen hath none such; better as she is
 For all her measures, a grave English maid,
 Than queen of snakes and Scots.
Randolph. She is over-fair
 To be so sweet, and hurt not. A good knight;
 Goodly to look on.
Murray. Yea, a good sword too, And of good kin; too light of loving though;
 These jangling song-smiths are keen love-mongers,
 They snap at all meats.
Darnley. What! by God I think, For all his soft French face and bright boy's sword,
 There be folks fairer: and for knightliness,
 These hot-lipped brawls of Paris breed sweet knights, —
 Mere stabbers for a laugh across the wine. —
Queen. There, I have danced you down for once, fair lord;
 You look pale now. Nay then for courtesy
 I must needs help you; do not bow your head,
 I am tall enough to reach close under it.
 [Kisses him.]
 Now come, we'll sit and see this passage through. —
Darnley. A courtesy, God help us! courtesy —
 Pray God it wound not where it should heal wounds.

Why, there was here last year some lord of France
 (Priest on the wrong side as some folk are prince)
 Told tales of Paris ladies — nay, by God,
 No jest for queen's lips to catch laughter of
 That would keep clean; I wot he made good mirth,
 But she laughed over sweetly, and in such wise —
 Nay, I laughed too, but lothly. —
Queen. How they look!
 The least thing courteous galls them to the bone.
 What would one say now I were thinking of?
Chastelard. It seems, some sweet thing.
Queen. True, a sweet one, sir, —
 That madrigal you made Alys de Saulx
 Of the three ways of love; the first kiss honor,
 The second pity, and the last kiss love.
 Which think you now was that I kissed you with?
Chastelard. It should be pity, if you be pitiful:
 For I am past all honoring that keep
 Outside the eye of battle, where my kin
 Fallen overseas have found this many a day
 No helm of mine between them; and for love,
 I think of that as dead men of good days
 Ere the wrong side of death was theirs, when God
 Was friends with them.
Queen. Good; call it pity, then.
 You have a subtle riddling skill at love
 Which is not like a lover. For my part,
 I am resolved to be well done with love,
 Though I were fairer-faced than all the world;
 As there be fairer. Think you, fair my knight,
 Love shall live after life in any man?
 I have given you stuff for riddles.

Chastelard. Most sweet queen,
 They say men dying remember, with
 sharp joy
 And rapid reluctance of desire,
 Some old thing, some swift breath of
 wind, some word,
 Some sword-stroke or dead lute-strain,
 some lost sight,
 Some sea-blossom stripped to the sun
 and burned
 At naked ebb—some river-flower that
 breathes
 Against the stream like a swooned
 swimmer's mouth—
 Some tear or laugh ere lip and eye were
 man's—
 Sweet stings that struck the blood in
 riding—nay,
 Some garment or sky-color or spice-
 smell,
 And die with heart and face shut fast
 on it,
 And know not why, and weep not: it
 may be
 Men shall hold love fast always in such
 wise
 In new fair lives where all are new
 things else,
 And know not why, and weep not.
Queen. A right rhyme,
 And right a rhyme's worth: nay, a
 sweet song, though.
 What! shall my cousin hold fast that
 love of his,
 Her face and talk, when life ends? as
 God grant
 His life end late and sweet! I love him
 well.
 She is fair enough, his lover; a fair-
 faced maid,
 With gray sweet eyes and tender touch
 of talk;
 And that, God wot, I wist not. See
 you, sir,
 Men say I needs must get wed hasti-
 ly;
 Do none point lips at him?
Chastelard. Yea, guessingly.
Queen. God help such lips! and get
 me leave to laugh!
 What should I do but paint and put
 him up.
 Like a gilt god, a saintship in a shrine,

For all fools' feast? God's mercy on
 men's wits!
 Tall as a housetop and as bare of
 brain—
 I'll have no staffs with fool-faced carven
 heads
 To hang my life on. Nay, for love, no
 more,
 For fear I laugh and set their eyes on
 edge
 To find out why I laugh. Good night,
 fair lords;
 Bid them cease playing. Give me your
 hand; good night.

SCENE III.—MARY BEATON'S *Cham-
 ber: night.*

Enter CHASTELARD.

Chastelard. I am not certain yet she
 will not come;
 For I can feel her hand's heat still in
 mine,
 Past doubting of, and see her brows
 half drawn,
 And half a light in the eyes. If she
 come not,
 I am no worse than he that dies to-
 night.
 This two years' patience gets an end at
 least,
 Whichever way I am well done with it.
 How hard the thin sweet moon is, split
 and laced
 And latticed over, just a stray of it
 Catching and clinging at a strip of wall,
 Hardly a hand's-breadth. Did she turn
 indeed
 In going out? not to catch up her gown
 The page let slip, but to keep sight of
 me?
 There was a soft small stir beneath her
 eyes
 Hard to put on, a quivering of her
 blood
 That knew of the old nights watched
 out wakefully.
 Those measures of her dancing too
 were changed—
 More swift and with more eager stops
 at whites
 And rapid pauses where breath failed
 her lips.

Enter MARY BEATON.

Oh, she is come: if you be she indeed,
Let me but hold your hand; what! no
word yet?

You turn and kiss me without word; O
sweet!

If you will slay me, be not over-quick,
Kill me with some slow heavy kiss that
plucks

The heart out at the lips. Alas! sweet
love,

Give me some old sweet word to kiss
away.

Is it a jest? for I can feel your hair
Touch me—I may embrace your body
too?

I know you well enough without sweet
words.

How should one make you speak? This
is not she.

Come in the light; nay, let me see your
eyes.

Ah, you it is? what have I done to you?
And do you look now to be slain for this
That you twist back and shudder like
one stabbed?

Mary Beaton. Yea, kill me now, and
do not look at me:

God knows I meant to die. Sir, for
God's love,

Kill me now quick ere I go mad with
shame!

Chastelard. Cling not upon my wrists:
let go the hilt:

Nay, you will bruise your hand with it.
Stand up;

You shall not have my sword forth.

Mary Beaton. Kill me now,

I will not rise: there, I am patient, see.
I will not strive, but kill me for God's
sake.

Chastelard. Pray you, rise up, and be
not shaken so:

Forgive me my rash words, my heart
was gone

After the thing you were: be not
ashamed;

Give me the shame, you have no part
in it;

Can I not say a word shall do you good?
Forgive that too.

Mary Beaton. I shall run crazed with
shame:

But when I felt your lips catch hold on
mine,

It stopped my breath: I would have
told you all.

Let me go out; you see I lied to you,
And I am shamed; I pray you, loose
me, sir,

Let me go out.

Chastelard. Think no base things of
me:

I were most base to let you go ashamed.
Think my heart's love and honor go
with you:

Yea, while I live, for your love's noble
sake,

I am your servant in what wise may be,
To love and serve you with right thank-
ful heart.

Mary Beaton. I have given men leave
to mock me, and must bear

What shame they please: you have
good cause to mock.

Let me pass now.

Chastelard. You know I mock you
not.

If ever I leave off to honor you,
God give me shame! I were the worst
churl born.

Mary Beaton. No marvel though the
queen should love you too,
Being such a knight. I pray you for
her love,

Lord Chastelard, of your great courtesy,
Think now no scorn to give me my last
kiss

That I shall have of man before I die.
Even the same lips you kissed and knew
not of

Will you kiss now, knowing the shame
of them,

And say no one word to me afterwards,
That I may see I have loved the best
lover

And man most courteous of all men
alive?

Mary Seyton (within). Here, fetch
the light: nay, this way; enter
all.

Mary Beaton. I am twice undone.
Fly, get some hiding, sir;
They have spied upon me somehow.

Chastelard. Nay, fear not;
Stand by my side.

Enter MARY SEYTON and MARY HAMILTON.

Mary Hamilton. Give me that light: this way.

Chastelard. What jest is here, fair ladies? it walks late, Something too late for laughing.

Mary Seyton. Nay, fair sir, What jest is this of yours? Look to your lady:

She is nigh swooned. The queen shall know all this.

Mary Hamilton. A grievous shame it is we are fallen upon; Hold forth the light. Is this your care of us?

Nay, come, look up: this is no game, God wot.

Chastelard. Shame shall befall them that speak shamefully:

I swear this lady is as pure and good

As any maiden, and who believes me not

Shall keep the shame for his part and the lie.

To them that come in honor and not in hate,

I will make answer. — Lady, have good heart.

Give me the light there: I will see you forth.

ACT II. — DARNLEY.

SCENE I. — *The great Chamber in Holyrood.*

The QUEEN and MARY SEYTON.

Queen. But will you swear it?

Mary Seyton. Swear it, madam?

Queen. Ay — Swear it.

Mary Seyton. Madam, I am not friends with them.

Queen. Swear then against them if you are not friends.

Mary Seyton. Indeed I saw them kiss.

Queen. So lovers use —

What, their mouths close? a goodly way of love!

Or but the hands? or on her throat? Prithee —

You have sworn that.

Mary Seyton. I say what I saw done.

Queen. Ay, you did see her cheeks (God smite them red!)

Kissed either side? what, they must eat strange food,

Those singing lips of his?

Mary Seyton. Sweet meat enough — They started at my coming five yards off,

But there they were.

Queen. A maid may have kissed cheeks

And no shame in them — yet one would not swear.

You have sworn that. Pray God he be not mad:

A sickness in his eyes. The left side love

(I was told that) and the right courtesy.

'Tis good fools' fashion. What! no more but this?

For me, God knows I am no whit wroth, — not I;

But, for your fame's sake that her shame will sting,

I cannot see a way to pardon her, —

For your fame's sake, lest that be prated of.

Mary Seyton. Nay, if she were not chaste — I have not said

She was not chaste.

Queen. I know you are tender of her;

And your sweet word will hardly turn her sweet.

Mary Seyton. Indeed I would fain do her any good.

Shall I not take some gracious word to her?

Queen. Bid her not come or wait on me to-day.

Mary Seyton. Will you see him?

Queen. See — oh, this Chastelard?

He doth not well to sing maids into shame;

And folk are sharp here; yet for sweet friends' sake

Assuredly I'll see him. I am not wroth.

A goodly man, and a good sword
thereto—

It may be he shall wed her. I am not
wroth.

Mary Seyton. Nay, though she bore
with him, she hath no great love,
I doubt me, that way.

Queen. God mend all, I pray—
And keep us from all wrong-doing and
wild words.

I think there is no fault men fall upon
But I could pardon. Look you, I would
swear

She were no paramour for any man,
So well I love her.

Mary Seyton. Am I to bid him in?

Queen. As you will, sweet. But if
you held me hard

You did me grievous wrong. Doth he
wait there?

Men call me over-tender; I had rather
so,

Than too ungracious.—Father, what
will you do?

Enter FATHER BLACK.

Father Black. God's peace and health
of soul be with the queen!

And pardon be with me though I speak
truth.

As I was going on peaceable men's
wise

Through your good town, desiring no
man harm,

A kind of shameful woman with thief's
lips

Spake somewhat to me over a thrust-
out chin,

Soliciting as I deemed an alms; which
alms

(Remembering what was writ of Mag-
dalen)

I gave not grudging but with pure good
heart,

When lo! some scurril children that
lurked near,

Set there by Satan for my stumbling-
stone,

Fell hooting with necks thwart and
eyes a-squint,

Screeded and made horns and shot
out tongues at me,—

As at my Lord the Jews shot out their
tongues,

And made their heads wag; I consid-
ering this

Took up my cross in patience, and
passed forth:

Nevertheless one ran between my feet,
And made me totter, using speech and
signs

I smart with shame to think of: then
my blood

Kindled, and I was moved to smite the
knave,

And the knave howled; whereat the
lewd whole herd

Brake forth upon me, and cast mire
and stones,

So that I ran sore risk of bruise or
gash

If they had touched; likewise I heard
men say,

(Their foul speech missed not of mine
ear) they cried,

“This devil's mass-priest hankers for
new flesh

Like a dry hound; let him seek such
at home,

Snuff and smoke out the queen's
French”—

Queen. They said that?

Father Black. “—French paramours
that breed more shames than
sons

All her court through;” forgive me.

Queen. With my heart.

Father, you see the hatefulness of
these—

They loathe us for our love. I am not
moved:

What should I do being angry? By
this hand

(Which is not big enough to bruise
their lips),

I marvel what thing should be done
with me

To make me wroth. We must have
patience with us

When we seek thank of men.

Father Black. Madam, farewell;

I pray God keep you in such patient
heart. [*Exit.*]

Queen. Let him come now.

Mary Seyton. Madam, he is at hand.
[*Exit.*]

Enter CHASTELARD.

Queen. Give me that broidery-frame ;
 how, gone so soon ?
 No maid about ? Reach me some skein
 of silk.
 What ! are you come, fair lord ? Now
 by my life
 That lives here idle, I am right glad of
 you ;
 I have slept so well and sweet since
 yesternight
 It seems our dancing put me in glad
 heart.
 Did you sleep well ?
Chastelard. Yea, as a man may sleep.
Queen. You smile as if I jested ; do
 not men
 Sleep as we do ? Had you fair dreams
 in the night ?
 For me — but I should fret you with
 my dreams —
 I dreamed sweet things. You are good
 at soothsaying :
 Make me a sonnet of my dream.
Chastelard. I will,
 When I shall know it.
Queen. I thought I was asleep
 In Paris, lying by my lord, and knew
 In some wise he was well awake, and yet
 I could not wake too ; and I seemed to
 know
 He hated me, and the least breath I
 made
 Would turn somehow to slay or stifle
 me.
 Then in brief time he rose and went
 away,
 Saying, *Let her dream, but when her
 dream is out
 I will come back and kill her as she wakes.*
 And I lay sick and trembling with sore
 fear,
 And still I knew that I was deep asleep ;
 And thinking, *I must dream now, or I
 die,
 God send me some good dream lest I be
 slain !*
 Fell fancying one had bound my feet
 with cords,
 And bade me dance, and the first meas-
 ure made
 I fell upon my face, and wept for pain ;
 And my cords broke, and I began the
 dance

To a bitter tune ; and he that danced
 with me
 Was clothed in black with long red
 lines and bars,
 And masked down to the lips, but by
 the chin
 I knew you though your lips were sewn
 up close
 With scarlet thread all dabbled wet in
 blood.
 And then I knew the dream was not for
 good.
 And striving with sore travail to reach up
 And kiss you (you were taller in my
 dream)
 I missed your lips, and woke.
Chastelard. Sweet dreams, you said ?
 An evil dream I hold it for, sweet love.
Queen. You call love sweet ; yea, what
 is bitter, then ?
 There's nothing broken sleep could hit
 upon
 So bitter as the breaking down of love
 You call me sweet ; I am not sweet to
 you,
 Nor you — O, I would say not sweet to
 me,
 And if I said so I should hardly lie.
 But there have been those things be-
 tween us, sir,
 That men call sweet.
Chastelard. I know not how *There is*
Turns to There hath been ; 'tis a heavier
change
 Than change of flesh to dust. Yet,
 though years change,
 And good things end, and evil things
 grow great,
 The old love that was, or that was
 dreamed about,
 That sang and kissed and wept upon
 itself,
 Laughed and ran mad with love of its
 own face,
 That was a sweet thing.
Queen. Nay, I know not well.
 'Tis when the man is held fast under-
 ground
 They say for sooth what manner of
 heart he had.
 We are alive, and cannot be well sure
 If we loved much or little : think you not
 It were convenient one of us should die ?

Chastelard. Madam, your speech is harsh to understand.

Queen. Why, there could come no change then; one of us Would never need to fear our love might turn
To the sad thing that it may grow to be.
I would sometimes all things were dead asleep
That I have loved, all buried in soft beds
And sealed with dreams and visions, and each dawn
Sung to by sorrows, and all night assuaged
By short sweet kisses and by sweet long loves
For old life's sake, lest weeping over-much
Should wake them in a strange new time, and arm
Memory's blind hand to kill forgetful ness.

Chastelard. Look, you dream still, and sadly.

Queen. Sooth, a dream;
For such things died or lied in sweet love's face,
And I forget them not, God help my wit!
I would the whole world were made up of sleep
And life not fashioned out of lies and loves.
We foolish women have such times, you know,
When we are weary or afraid or sick
For perfect nothing.

Chastelard (aside). Now would one be fain
To know what bitter or what dangerous thing
She thinks of, softly chafing her soft lip.
She must mean evil.

Queen. Are you sad, too, sir,
That you say nothing?

Chastelard. I? not sad a jot —
Though this your talk might make a blithe man sad.

Queen. O me! I must not let stray sorrows out;
They are ill to fledge, and if they feel blithe air

They wail and chirp untunefully. Would God
I had been a man! when I was born, men say,
My father turned his face and wept to think
I was no man.
Chastelard. Will you weep, too?
Queen. In sooth,
If I were man I should be no base man;
I could have fought; yea, I could fight now, too,
If men would show me; I would I were the king!
I should be all ways better than I am.
Chastelard. Nay, would you have more honor, having this —
Men's hearts and loves and the sweet spoil of souls
Given you like simple gold to bind your hair?
Say you were king of thews, not queen of souls,
An iron headpiece hammered to a head,
You might fail, too.

Queen. No, then I would not fail,
Or God should make me woman back again.
To be King James — you hear men say
King James,
The word sounds like a piece of gold thrown down,
Rings with a round and royal note in it —
A name to write good record of; this king
Fought here and there, was beaten such a day,
And came at last to a good end, his life
Being all lived out, and for the main part well
And like a king's life; then to have men say
(As now they say of Flodden, here they broke
And there they held up to the end) years back
They saw you — yea, I saw the king's face helmed
Red in the hot lit foreground of some fight
Hold the whole war as it were by the bit, a horse

Fit for his knees' grip—the great rearing war

That frothed with lips flung up, and shook men's lives

*Off either flank of it like snow; I saw
(You could not hear as his sword rang),
saw him*

*Shout, laugh, smile straight, and flung
the riven ranks,*

*Move as the wind moves, and his horse's
feet*

*Stripe their long flags with dust. Why,
if one died,*

*To die so in the heart and heat of war
Were a much goodlier thing than living
soft*

*And speaking sweet for fear of men.
Woe's me!*

*Is there no way to pluck this body off?
Then I should never fear a man again,
Even in my dreams I should not; no,
by heaven.*

*Chastelard. I never thought you did
fear any thing.*

*Queen. God knows I do; I could be
sick with wrath*

*To think what grievous fear I have
'twixt whiles*

*Of mine own self and of base men.
Last night*

*If certain lords were glancing where I
was*

*Under the eyelid, with sharp lip and
brow,*

*I tell you, for pure shame and fear of
them,*

I could have gone and slain them.

Chastelard. Verily,

*You are changed since those good days
that fell in France;*

*But yet I think you are not so changed
at heart*

As to fear man.

Queen. I would I had no need.

*Lend me your sword a little: a fair
sword,*

*I see the fingers that I hold it with
Clear in the blade, bright pink, the
shell-color,*

*Brighter than flesh is really, curved all
round.*

*Now men would mock if I should wear
it here,*

*Bound under bosom with a girdle,
here,*

*And yet I have heart enough to wear it
well.*

*Speak to me like a woman, let me see
If I can play at man.*

Chastelard. God save King James!

*Queen. Would you could change
now! Fie, this will not do:*

*Unclasp your sword; nay, the hilt hurts
my side;*

*It sticks fast here. Unbind this knot
for me:*

*Stoop, and you'll see it closer; thank
you: there.*

*Now I can breathe, sir. Ah! it hurts
me, though:*

This was fool's play.

*Chastelard. Yea, you are better so,
Without the sword; your eyes are
stronger things,*

Whether to save or slay.

Queen. Alas, my side!

*It hurts right sorely. Is it not pitiful
Our souls should be so bound about
with flesh*

*Even when they leap and smite with
wings and feet,*

*The least pain plucks them back, puts
out their eyes,*

*Turns them to tears and words? Ah,
my sweet knight,*

*You have the better of us that weave
and weep*

*While the blithe battle blows upon
your eyes*

*Like rain and wind; yet I remember
too*

*When this last year the fight at Cor-
richie*

*Reddened the rushes with stained fen-
water,*

*I rode with my good men, and took de-
light,*

*Feeling the sweet clear wind upon my
eyes,*

*And rainy soft smells blown upon my
face*

*In riding: then the great fight jarred
and joined,*

*And the sound stung me right through
heart and all;*

For I was here, see, gazing off the hills,

In the wet air; our housings were all wet;
 And not a plume stood stiffly past the ear,
 But flapped between the bridle and the neck;
 And under us we saw the battle go
 Like running water; I could see by fits
 Some helm the rain fell shining off, some flag
 Snap from the staff, shorn through or broken short
 In the man's falling: yea, one seemed to catch
 The very grasp of tumbled men at men,
 Teeth clinched in throats, hands riveted in hair,
 Tearing the life out with no help of swords.
 And all the clamor seemed to shine, the light
 Seemed to shout as a man doth; twice I laughed —
 I tell you, twice my heart swelled out with thirst
 To be into the battle; see, fair lord,
 I swear it seemed I might have made a knight,
 And yet the simple bracing of a belt
 Makes me cry out; this is too pitiful,
 This dusty half of us made up with fears. —
 Have you been ever quite so glad to fight
 As I have thought men must? pray you, speak truth.
Chastelard. Yea, when the time came, there caught hold of me
 Such pleasure in the head and hands and blood
 As may be kindled under loving lips:
 Crossing the ferry once to the Clerk's Field,
 I mind me how the plashing noise of Seine
 Put fire into my face for joy, and how
 My blood kept measure with the swinging boat
 Till we touched land, all for the sake of that
 Which should be soon.

Queen. Her name, for God's love, sir;
 You slew your friend for love's sake? nay, the name.
Chastelard. Faith, I forget.
Queen. Now by the faith I have
 You have no faith to swear by.
Chastelard. A good sword:
 We left him quiet after a thrust or twain.
Queen. I would I had been at hand,
 and marked them off
 As the maids did when we played singing games:
 You outwent me at rhyming; but for faith,
 We fight best there. I would I had seen you fight.
Chastelard. I would you had; his play was worth an eye;
 He made some gallant way before that pass
 Which made me way through him.
Queen. Would I saw that!
 How did you slay him?
Chastelard. A clean pass — this way;
 Right in the side here, where the blood has root.
 His wrist went round in pushing, see you, thus,
 Or he had pierced me.
Queen. Yea, I see, sweet knight.
 I have a mind to love you for his sake;
 Would I had seen!
Chastelard. Hugues de Marsillac —
 I have the name now; 'twas a goodly one
 Before he changed it for a dusty name.
Queen. Talk not of death; I would hear living talk
 Of good live swords and good strokes struck withal,
 Brave battles and the mirth of mingling men,
 Not of cold names you greet a dead man with.
 You are yet young for fighting; but in fight
 Have you never caught a wound?
Chastelard. Yea, twice or so:
 The first time, in a little outlying field
 (My first field) at the sleepy gray of dawn,

They found us drowsy, fumbling at our girths,
And rode us down by heaps; I took a hurt
Here in the shoulder.

Queen. Ah, I mind well now;
Did you not ride a day's space afterward,

Having two wounds? yea, Dandelot it was,
That Dandelot took word of it. I know,
Sitting at meat when the news came to us

I had nigh swooned but for those Florence eyes

Slanting my way with sleek lids drawn up close —

Yea, and she said, the Italian brokeress,
She said such men were good for great queens' love.

I would you might die, when you come to die,

Like a knight slain. Pray God we make good ends.

For love too, love dies hard or easily,
But some way dies on some day, ere we die.

Chastelard. You made a song once of old flowers and loves,

Will you not sing that rather? 'tis long gone

Since you sang last.

Queen. I had rather sigh than sing,
And sleep than sigh; 'tis long since verily,

But I will once more sing; ay, thus it was. [Sings.

1.

*J'ai vu faner bien des choses,
Mainte feuille aller au vent.
En songeant aux vieilles roses,
J'ai pleuré souvent.*

2.

*Vois-tu dans les roses mortes
Amour qui sourit caché?
O mon amant, à nos portes
L'as-tu vu couché?*

3.

*As-tu vu jamais au monde
Vénus chasser et courir
Fille de l'onde, avec l'onde
Doit-elle mourir?*

4.

*Aux jours de neige et de givre
L'amour s'effeuille et s'endort;
Avec mai doit-il revivre,
Ou bien est-il mort?*

5.

*Qui sait où s'en vont les roses?
Qui sait où s'en va le vent?
En songeant à telle chose,
J'ai pleuré souvent.*

I never heard yet but love made good knights,

But for pure faith, by Mary's holiness,
I think she lies about men's lips asleep,
And if one kiss or pluck her by the hand

To wake her, why God help your woman's wit,

Faith is but dead; dig her grave deep at heart,

And hide her face with cerecloths; farewell faith.

Would I could tell why I talk idly. Look,

Here come my riddle-readers. Welcome all!

Enter MURRAY, DARNLEY, RANDOLPH, LINDSAY, MORTON, and other Lords.

Sirs, be right welcome. Stand you by my side,

Fair cousin, I must lean on love or fall;
You are a goodly staff, sir; tall enough,

And fair enough to serve. My gentle lords,

I am full glad of God that in great grace
He hath given me such a lordly stay as this;

There is no better friended queen alive.

For the repealing of those banished men

That stand in peril yet of last year's fault,

It is our will; you have our seal to that.
 Brother, we hear harsh bruits of bad
 report
 Blown up and down about our almoner;
 See you to this: let him be sought into:
 They say lewd folk make ballads of
 their spleen,
 Strew miry ways of words with talk of
 him;
 If they have cause let him be spoken
 with.
Lindsay. Madam, they charge him
 with so rank a life
 Were it not well this fellow were
 plucked out —
 Seeing this is not an eye that doth
 offend,
 But a blurred glass it were no harm to
 break;
 Yea rather it were gracious to be done?
Queen. Let him be weighed, and use
 him as he is;
 I am of my nature pitiful, ye know,
 And cannot turn my love unto a thorn
 In so brief space. Ye are all most
 virtuous;
 Yea, there is goodness grafted on this
 land;
 But yet compassion is some part of
 God.
 There is much heavier business held on
 hand
 Than one man's goodness: yea, as
 things fare here,
 A matter worth more weighing. All
 you wot
 I am to choose a help to my weak feet,
 A lamp before my face, a lord and
 friend
 To walk with me in weary ways, high
 up
 Between the wind and rain and the hot
 sun.
 Now I have chosen a helper to myself,
 I wot the best a woman ever won;
 A man that loves me, and a royal man,
 A goodly love and lord for any queen.
 But for the peril and despite of men
 I have some time tarried and withheld
 myself,
 Not fearful of his worthiness nor you,
 But with some lady's loathing to let
 out

My whole heart's love; for truly this is
 hard,
 Not like a woman's fashion, shame-
 facedness
 And noble grave reluctance of herself
 To be the tongue and cry of her own
 heart.
 Nathless plain speech is better than
 much wit,
 So ye shall bear with me; albeit I think
 Ye have caught the mark whereat my
 heart is bent.
 I have kept close counsel and shut up
 men's lips,
 But lightly shall a woman's will slip out,
 The foolish little winged will of her,
 Through cheek or eye when tongue is
 charmed asleep.
 For that good lord I have good will to
 wed,
 I wot he knew long since which way it
 flew,
 Even till it lit on his right wrist and
 sang.
 Lo, here I take him by the hand: fair
 lords,
 This is my kinsman, made of mine own
 blood,
 I take to halve the state and services
 That bow down to me, and to be my
 head,
 My chief, my master, my sweet lord
 and king.
 Now shall I never say "sweet cousin"
 more
 To my dear head and husband; here,
 fair sir,
 I give you all the heart of love in me
 To gather off my lips. Did it like
 you,
 The taste of it? sir, it was whole and
 true.
 God save our king!
Darnley. Nay, nay, sweet love, no
 lord;
 No king of yours though I were lord
 of these.
Queen. Let word be sent to all good
 friends of ours
 To help us to be glad; England and
 France
 Shall bear great part of our rejoicings
 up.

Give me your hand, dear lord; for from
this time
(must not walk alone. Lords, have
good cheer:
For you shall have a better face than
mine
To set upon your kingly gold and show
For Scotland's forehead in the van of
things.

Go with us now, and see this news set
out.

[*Exit* QUEEN, DARNLEY, and Lords.

As CHASTELARD *is going out, enter*

MARY BEATON.

Mary Beaton. Have you yet heard?
You knew of this?

Chastelard. I know.

I was just thinking how such things were
made

And were so fair as this is. Do you
know

She held me here and talked,—the
most sweet talk

Men ever heard of?

Mary Beaton. You hate me to the
heart.

What will you do?

Chastelard. I know not: die some
day,

But live as long and lightly as I
can.

Will you now love me? faith, but if you
do,

It were much better you were dead and
hearsed.

Will you do one thing for me?

Mary Beaton. Yea, all things.

Chastelard. Speak truth a little, for
God's sake: indeed

It were no harm to do. Come, will
you, sweet?

Though it be but to please God.

Mary Beaton. What will you do?

Chastelard. Ay, true, I must do some-
what. Let me see:

To get between and tread upon his
face—

Catch both her hands and bid men look
at them,

How pure they were—I would do none
of these,

Though they got wedded all the days
in the year.

We may do well yet when all's come
and gone.

I pray you on this wedding night of
theirs

Do but one thing that I shall ask of you,
And Darnley will not hunger as I shall
For that good time. Sweet, will you
swear me this?

Mary Beaton. Yea; though to do it
were mortal to my soul

As the chief sin.

Chastelard. I thank you: let us go.

ACT III.—THE QUEEN.

SCENE I.—*The Queen's Chamber.*

*Night. Lights burning in front of
the bed.*

Enter CHASTELARD *and* MARY BEATON.

Mary Beaton. Be tender of your feet.

Chastelard. I shall not fail:

These ways have light enough to help
a man

That walks with such stirred blood in
him as mine.

Mary Beaton. I would yet plead with
you to save your head:

Nay, let this be then: sir, I chide you
not.

Nay, let all come. Do not abide her
yet.

Chastelard. Have you read never in
French books the song

Called the Duke's Song, some boy made
ages back,

A song of drag-nets hauled across
thwart seas

And plucked up with rent sides, and
caught therein

A strange-haired woman with sad sing-
ing lips,

Cold in the cheek like any stray of sea,
And sweet to touch? so that men see-

ing her face,
And how she sighed out little Ahs of

pain

And soft cries sobbing sideways from
her mouth,

Fell in hot love, and having lain with
her

Died soon? One time I could have told
it through:

Now I have kissed the sea-witch on her
eyes,
And my lips ache with it: but I shall
sleep

Full soon, and a good space of sleep.

Mary Beaton. Alas!

Chastelard. What makes you sigh
though I be found a fool?

You have no blame: and for my death,
sweet friend,

I never could have lived long either way.
Why, as I live, the joy I have of this
Would make men mad that were not
mad with love;

I hear my blood sing, and my lifted heart
Is like a springing water blown of wind
For pleasure of this deed. Now, in
God's name,

I swear if there be danger in delight
I must die now: if joys have deadly
teeth,

I'll have them bite my soul to death,
and end

In the old asp's way, Egyptian-wise; be
killed

In a royal purple fashion. Look, my
love

Would kill me if my body were past
hurt

Of any man's hand; and to die thereof,
I say, is sweeter than all sorts of life.

I would not have her love me now, for
then

I should die meanlier some time. I am
safe,

Sure of her face, my life's end in her
sight,

My blood shed out about her feet — by
God,

My heart feels drunken when I think
of it.

See you, she will not rid herself of me,
Not though she slay me: her sweet lips
and life

Will smell of my spilt blood.

Mary Beaton. Give me good night.

Chastelard. Yea, and good thanks.

[*Exit MARY BEATON.*]

Here is the very place:

Here has her body bowed the pillows
in,

And here her head thrust under made
the sheet

Smell soft of her mixed hair and spice:
even here

Her arms pushed back the coverlet,
pulled here

The golden silken curtain halfway in,
It may be, and made room to lean out
loose,

Fair tender fallen arms. Now, if God
would,

Doubtless he might take pity on my
soul

To give me three clear hours, and then
red hell

Snare me forever: this were merciful:
If I were God now, I should do thus
much.

I must die next, and this were not so
hard

For him to let me eat sweet fruit, and
die

With my lips sweet from it. For one
shall have

This fare for common days'-bread, which
to me

Should be a touch kept always on my
sense

To make hell soft, yea, the keen pain
of hell

Soft as the loosening of wound arms in
sleep.

Ah, love is good, and the worst part of it
More than all things but death. She
will be here

In some small while, and see me face
to face

That am to give up life for her, and go
Where a man lies with all his loves
put out

And his lips full of earth. I think on
her,

And the old pleasure stings and makes
half-tears

Under mine eyelids. Prithee, love,
come fast,

That I may die soon; yea, some kisses
through,

I shall die joyfully enough, so God
Keep me alive till then. I feel her
feet

Coming far off; now must I hold my
heart,

Steadying my blood to see her patiently.
[*Hides himself by the bed.*]

Enter the QUEEN and DARNLEY.

Queen. Nay, now go back: I have sent off my folk,

Maries and all. Pray you, let be my hair;

I cannot twist the gold thread out of it
That you wound in so close. Look,
here it clings:

Ah! now you mar my hair unwinding it.
Do me no hurt, sir.

Darnley. I would do you ease;
Let me stay here.

Queen. Nay, will you go, my lord?

Darnley. Eh? would you use me as
a girl does fruit,

Touched with her mouth and pulled
away for game

To look thereon ere her lips feed? but
see,

By God, I fare the worse for you.

Queen. Fair sir,

Give me this hour to watch with and
say prayers:

You have not faith—it needs me to
say prayers,

That with commending of this deed to
God

I may get grace for it.

Darnley. Why, lacks it grace?

Is not all wedlock gracious of itself?

Queen. Nay, that I know not of.
Come, sweet, be hence.

Darnley. You have a sort of jewel
in your neck

That's like mine here.

Queen. Keep off your hands and go:
You have no courtesy to be a king.

Darnley. Well, I will go: nay, but I
thwart you not.

Do as you will, and get you grace;
farewell,

And for my part, grace keep this watch
with me!

For I need grace to bear with you so
much. [*Exit.*]

Queen. So, he is forth. Let me be-
hold myself;

I am too pale to be so hot; I marvel
So little color should be bold in the
face

When the blood is not quieted. I have
But a brief space to cool my thoughts
upon.

If one should wear the hair thus heaped
and curled

Would it look best? or this way in the
neck?

Could one ungirdle in such wise one's
heart,

[*Taking off her girdle.*]

And ease it inwards as the waist is
eased

By slackening of the alid clasp on it!
How soft the silk is—gracious color
too;

Violet shadows like new veins thrown
up

Each arm, and gold to fleck the faint
sweet green

Where the wrist lies thus eased. I am
right glad

I have no maids about to hasten me:

So I will rest, and see my hair shed
down

On either silk side of my woven sleeves,
Get some new way to bind it back with
—yea,

Fair mirror-glass, I am well ware of
you,

Yea, I know that, I am quite beautiful.

How my hair shines!—Fair face, be
friends with me,

And I will sing to you: look in my face
Now, and your mouth must help the
song in mine.

*Alys la châtelaine
Voit venir de par Seine
Thibault le capitaine
Qui parle ainsi:*

Was that the wind in the casement?
nay, no more

But the comb drawn through half my
hissing hair

Laid on my arms—yet my flesh moved
at it.

*Dans ma camaille
Plus de clou qui vaïlle,
Dans ma cotte-maille
Plus de fer aussi.*

Ah, but I wrong the ballad-verse:
what's good

In such frayed fringes of old rhymes,
to make

Their broken burden lag with us? me-
seems

I could be sad now if I fell to think
The least sad thing; ay, that sweet
lady's fool,

Fool sorrow, would make merry with
mine eyes

For a small thing. Nay, but I will
keep glad.

Nor shall old sorrow be false friends
with me.

But my first wedding was not like to
this —

Fair faces then and laughter and sweet
game,

And a pale little mouth that clung on
mine

When I had kissed him by the faded
eyes

And either thin cheek beating with
faint blood.

Well, he was sure to die soon; I do
think

He would have given his body to be
slain,

Having embraced my body. Now, God
knows,

I have no man to do as much for me
As give me but a little of his blood'

To fill my beauty from, though I go
down

Pale to my grave for want — I think
not. Pale —

I am too pale surely — Ah!

*[Sees him in the glass, coming for-
ward.]*

Chastelard. Be not afraid.

Queen. Saint Mary! what a shaken
wit have I!

Nay, is it you? who let you through
the doors?

Where be my maidens? which way got
you in?

Nay, but stand up, kiss not my hands
so hard;

By God's fair body, if you but breathe
on them

You are just dead and slain at once.
What adder

Has bit you mirthful mad? for by this
light

A man to have his head laughed off for
mirth

Is no great jest. Lay not your eyes on
me;

What! would you not be slain?

Chastelard. I pray you, madam,
Bear with me a brief space, and let me
speak.

I will not touch your garments even,
nor speak

But in soft wise, and look some other
way,

If that it like you; for I came not here
For pleasure of the eyes; yet, if you
will,

Let me look on you.

Queen. As you will, fair sir.

Give me that coil to gather in my
hair —

I thank you — and my girdle — nay,
that side.

Speak, if you will: yet if you will be
gone,

Why, you shall go, because I hate you
not.

You know that I might slay you with
my lips,

With calling out? but I will hold my
peace.

Chastelard. Yea, do some while. I
had a thing to say;

I know not wholly what thing. O my
sweet,

I am come here to take farewell of love
That I have served, and life that I have
lived

Made up of love, here in the sight of
you

That all my life's time I loved more
than God,

Who quits me thus with bitter death
for it.

For you well know that I must shortly
die,

My life being wound about you as it is,
Who love me not; yet do not hate me,

Who love me not; yet do not hate me,
sweet,

But tell me wherein I came short of
love;

For doubtless I came short of a just
love,

And fell in some fool's fault that anger-
ed you.

Now that I talk men dig my grave for
me

Out in the rain, and in a little while
I shall be thrust in some sad space of
earth

Out of your eyes; and you, O you my
love,

A newly wedded lady full of mirth
And a queen girt with all good people's
love,

You shall be fair and merry in all your
days.

Is this so much for me to have of you?
Do but speak, sweet: I know these are
no words

A man should say though he were now
to die,

But I am as a child for love, and have
No strength at heart; yea, I am afraid
to die,

For the harsh dust will lie upon my
face

Too thick to see you pass. Look how
I love you;

I did so love you always, that your
face

Seen through my sleep has wrung mine
eyes to tears

For pure delight in you. Why do you
thus?

You answer not, but your lips curl in
twain

And your face moves; there, I shall
make you weep,

And be a coward too; it were much
best

I should be slain.

Queen. Yea, best such folk were slain;
Why should they live to cozen fools
with lies?

You would swear now you have used
me faithfully;

Shall I not make you swear? I am
ware of you:

You will not do it, nay, for the fear of
God

You will not swear. Come, I am merciful;

God made a foolish woman, making me,
And I have loved your mistress with
whole heart;

Say you do love her, you shall marry
her

And she give thanks: yet I could wish
your love

Had not so lightly chosen forth a face-
For your fair sake, because I hate you
not.

Chastelard. What is to say? why, you
do surely know

That since my days were counted for a
man's

I have loved you; yea, how past help
and sense,

Whatever thing was bitter to my love,
I have loved you; how when I rode in
war

Your face went floated in among men's
helms,

Your voice went through the shriek of
slipping swords;

Yea, and I never have loved women
well,

Seeing always in my sight I had your
lips

Curled over, red and sweet; and the
soft space

Of carven brows, and splendor of great
throat

Swayed lily-wise: what pleasure should
one have

To wind his arms about a lesser love?
I have seen you; why, this were joy
enough

For God's eyes up in heaven, only to see
And to come never nearer than I am.

Why, it was in my flesh, my bone and
blood,

Bound in my brain, to love you; yea,
and writ

All my heart over: if I would lie to you,
I doubt I could not lie. Ah, you see
now,

You know now well enough; yea, there,
sweet love,

Let me kiss there.

Queen. I love you best of them.

Clasp me quite round till your lips
cleave on mine,—

False mine, that did you wrong. For-
give them dearly,

As you are sweet to them; for by love's
love

I am not that evil woman in my heart
That laughs at a rent faith. O Chas-
telard,

Since this was broken to me of your
new love

I have not seen the face of a sweet hour.
Nay, if there be no pardon in a man,
What shall a woman have for loving
him?

Pardon me, sweet.

Chastelard. Yea, so I pardon you,
And this side now; the first way. Would
God please

To slay me so! who knows how he
might please?

Now I am thinking, if you know it not,
How I might kill you, kiss your breath
clean out,

And take your soul to bring mine
through to God

That our two souls might close and be
one twain

Or a twain one, and God himself want
skill

To set us either severally apart.

Oh, you must overlive me many years,
And many years my soul be in waste
hell;

But when some time God can no more
refrain

To lay death like a kiss across your
lips,

And great lords bear you clothed with
funeral things,

And your crown girded over deadly
brows,

Then after all your happy reach of life
For pity you shall touch me with your
eyes,

Remembering love was fellow with my
flesh

Here in sweet earth, and make me well
of love,

And heal my many years with piteous-
ness.

Queen. You talk too sadly and too
feignedly.

Chastelard. Too sad, but not too
feigned; I am sad

That I shall die here without feigning
thus;

And without feigning I were fain to live.

Queen. Alas, you will be taken pres-
ently,
And then you are but dead. Pray you,
get hence.

Chastelard. I will not.

Queen. Nay, for God's love be away;

You will be slain, and I get shame.
God's mercy!

You were stark mad to come here; kiss
me, sweet.

Oh, I do love you more than all men!
yea,

Take my lips to you, close mine eyes
up fast,

So you leave hold a little: there, for
pity,

Abide now, and to-morrow come to
me.

Nay, lest one see red kisses in my
throat—

Dear God! what shall I give you to be
gone?

Chastelard. I will not go. Look,
here's full night grown up;

Why should I seek to sleep away
from here?

The place is soft, and the lights burn
for sleep;

Be not you moved; I shall lie well
enough.

Queen. You are utterly undone.
Sweet, by my life,

You shall be saved with taking ship at
once.

For if you stay this foolish love's hour
out

There is not ten days' likely life in you.
This is no choice.

Chastelard. Nay, for I will not go.

Queen. Oh, me! this is that Bayard's
blood of yours

That makes you mad; yea, and you
shall not stay.

I do not understand. Mind, you must
die.

Alas, poor lord, you have no sense of
me;

I shall be deadly to you.

Chastelard. Yea, I saw that;

But I saw not that when my death's
day came

You could be quite so sweet to me.

Queen. My love!

If I could kiss my heart's root out on
you,

You would taste love hid at the core of
me.

Chastelard. Kiss me twice more.
This beautiful bowed head

That has such hair with kissing ripples
in,
And shivering soft eyelashes and brows
With fluttered blood; but laugh a little,
sweetly,

That I may see your sad mouth's laugh-
ing look

I have used sweet hours in seeing. Oh,
will you weep?

I pray you, do not weep.

Queen. Nay, dear, I have
No tears in me; I never shall weep
much,

I think, in all my life: I have wept for
wrath

Sometimes, and for mere pain, but for
love's pity

I cannot weep at all. I would to God
You loved me less; I give you all I can
For all this love of yours, and yet I am
sure

I shall live out the sorrow of your death
And be glad afterwards. You know I
am sorry.

I should weep now; forgive me for
your part.

God made me hard, I think. Alas!
you see

I had fain been other than I am.

Chastelard. Yea, love.

Comfort your heart. What way am I
to die?

Queen. Ah! will you go yet, sweet?

Chastelard. No, by God's body.

You will not see? how shall I make
you see?

Look, it may be love was a sort of curse
Made for my plague, and mixed up with
my days

Somewise in their beginning; or indeed
A bitter birth begotten of sad stars
At mine own body's birth, that heaven
might make

My life taste sharp where other men
drank sweet;

But whether in heavy body or broken
soul,

I know it must go on to be my death.

There was the matter of my fate in me
When I was fashioned first, and given
such life

As goes with a sad end; no fault but
God's.

Yea, and for all this I am not penitent;
You see I am perfect in these sins of
mine,

I have my sins writ in a book to read;
Now I shall die, and be well done with
this.

But I am sure you cannot see such
things,

God knows I blame you not.

Queen. What shall be said?

You know most well that I am sorrow-
ful.

But you should chide me. Sweet, you
have seen fair wars,

Have seen men slain and ridden red in
them;

Why will you die a chamberer's death
like this?

What! shall no praise be written of my
knight,

For my fame's sake?

Chastelard. Nay, no great praise, I
think;

I will no more; what should I do with
death,

Though I died goodly out of sight of
you?

I have gone once: here am I set now,
sweet,

Till the end come. That is your hus-
band, hark!

He knocks at the outer door. Kiss me
just once.

You know now all you have to say.
Nay, love,

Let him come quickly.

*Enter DARNLEY, and afterwards the
MARIES.*

Darnley. Yea, what thing is here?

Ay, this was what the doors shut fast
upon—

Ay, trust you to be fast at prayer, my
sweet?

By God, I have a mind—

Chastelard. What mind then, sir?

A liar's lewd mind, to coin sins for jest.
Because you take me in such wise as
this?

Look you, I have to die soon, and I
swear,

That am no liar, but a free knight and
lord,

I shall die clear of any sin to you.

Save that I came for no good will of mine;
 I am no carle, I play fair games with faith,
 And by mine honor for my sake I swear
 I say but truth; for no man's sake save mine,
 Lest I die shamed. Madam, I pray you say
 I am no liar; you know me what I am,
 A sinful man and shortly to be slain,
 That in a simple insolence of love
 Have stained with a fool's eyes your holy hours
 And with a fool's words put your pity out;
 Nathless you know if I be liar or no,
 Wherefore for God's sake give me grace to swear
 (Yea, for mine too) how past all praise you are,
 And stainless of all shame; and how all men
 Lie, saying you are not most good and innocent,
 Yea, the one thing good as God.
Darnley. O sir, we know
 You can swear well, being taken; you fair French
 Dare swallow God's name for a lewd love-sake
 As it were water. Nay, we know, we know;
 Save your sweet breath now, lest you lack it soon;
 We are simple, we; we have not heard of you.
 Madam, by God you are well shamed in him:
 Ay, trust you to be fingering in one's face,
 Play with one's neck-chain? ah, your maiden's man,
 A relic of your people's?
Chastelard. Hold your peace,
 Or I will set an edge on your own lie
 Shall scar yourself. Madam, have out your guard:
 'Tis time I were got hence.
Queen. Sweet Hamilton,
 Hold you my hand, and help me to sit down.

O Henry, I am beaten from my wits!
 Let me have time, and live; call out my people —
 Bring forth some armed guard to lay hold on him;
 But see no man be slain. Sirs, hide your swords;
 I will not have men slain.
Darnley. What! is this true?
 Call the queen's people — help the queen there, you —
 Ho, sirs! come in.

Enter some with the Guard.

Queen. Lay hold upon that man;
 Bear him away, but see he have no hurt.

Chastelard. Into your hands I render up myself
 With a free heart; deal with me how you list,
 But courteously, I pray you. Take my sword.

Farewell, great queen; the sweetness in your look
 Makes life look bitter on me. Farewell, sirs. [*He is taken out.*]

Darnley. Yea, pluck him forth, and have him hanged by dawn;
 He shall find bed enow to sleep. God's love!

That such a knave should be a knight like this!

Queen. Sir, peace awhile; this shall be as I please;

Take patience to you. Lords, I pray you see

All be done goodly; look they wrong him not.

Carmichael, you shall sleep with me to-night;

I am sorely shaken, even to the heart. Fair lords,

I thank you for your care. Sweet, stay by me.

ACT IV. — MURRAY.

SCENE I. — *The Queen's Lodging at St. Andrew's.*

The QUEEN and the four MARIES.

Queen. Why will you break my heart with praying to me?

You Seyton, you Carmichael, you have wits,
 You are not all run to tears; you do not think
 It is my wrath or will that whets this axe
 Against his neck?
Mary Seyton. Nay, these three weeks ago
 I said the queen's wrath was not sharp enough
 To shear a neck.
Queen. Sweet, and you did me right,
 And look you, what my mercy bears to fruit,
 Danger and deadly speech and a fresh fault
 Before the first was cool in people's lips;
 A goodly mercy: and I wash hands of it.—
 Speak you, there; have you ever found me sharp?
 You weep and whisper with sloped necks and heads
 Like two sick birds; do you think shame of me?
 Nay, I thank God none can think shame of me;
 But am I bitter, think you, to men's faults?
 I think I am too merciful, too meek:
 Why, if I could I would yet save this man;
 'Tis just boy's madness; a soft stripe or two
 Would do to scourge the fault in his French blood.
 I would fain let him go. You, Hamilton,
 You have a heart thewed harder than my heart;
 When mine would threat it sighs, and wrath in it
 Has a bird's flight and station, starves before
 It can well feed or fly: my pulse of wrath
 Sounds tender as the running down of tears.
 You are the hardest woman I have known,
 Your blood has frost and cruel gall in it,

You hold men off with bitter lips and eyes—
 Such maidens should serve England; now, perfoy,
 I doubt you would have got him slain at once.
 Come, would you not? come, would you let him live?
Mary Hamilton. Yes—I think yes; I cannot tell; maybe
 I would have seen him punished.
Queen. Look you now,
 There's maiden mercy; I would have him live—
 For all my wifehood, maybe I weep too:
 Here's a mere maiden falls to slaying at once,
 Small shrift for her; God keep us from such hearts!
 I am a queen too that would have him live,
 But one that has no wrong and is no queen,
 She would— What are you saying there, you twain?
Mary Carmichael. I said a queen's face and so fair an one's
 Would lose no grace for giving grace away;
 That gift comes back upon the mouth it left,
 And makes it sweeter, and sets fresh red on it.
Queen. This comes of sonnets when the dance draws breath;
 These talking times will make a dearth of grace.
 But you— what ails you that your lips are shut?
 Weep, if you will; here are four friends of yours
 To weep as fast for pity of your tears.
 Do you desire him dead? nay, but men say
 He was your friend, he fought them on your side,
 He made you songs— God knows what songs he made!
 Speak you for him a little: will you not?
Mary Beaton. Madam, I have no words.

Queen. No words? no pity —
Have you no mercies for such men?
God help!

It seems I am the meekest heart on
earth —

Yea, the one tender woman left alive,
And knew it not. I will not let him
live,

For all my pity of him.

Mary Beaton. Nay, but, madam,
For God's love look a little to this
thing.

If you do slay him you are but shamed
to death;

All men will cry upon you, women
weep,

Turning your sweet name bitter with
their tears;

Red shame grow up out of your mem-
ory

And burn his face that would speak
well of you;

You shall have no good word nor pity,
none,

Till some such end be fallen upon you:
nay,

I am but cold, I knew I had no words.
I will keep silence.

Queen. Yea, now, as I live,
I wist not of it: troth, he shall not
die.

See you, I am pitiful, compassionate,
I would not have men slain for my
love's sake,

But if he live to do me three times
wrong,

Why then my shame would grow up
green and red

Like any flower. I am not whole at
heart;

In faith, I wot not what such things
should be.

I doubt it is but dangerous; he must
die.

Mary Beaton. Yea, but you will not
slay him.

Queen. Swear me that,
I'll say he shall not die for your oath's
sake.

What will you do for grief when he is
dead?

Mary Beaton. Nothing for grief, but
hold my peace and die.

Queen. Why, for your sweet sake one
might let him live;

But the first fault was a green seed of
shame,

And now the flower, and deadly fruit
will come

With apple-time in, autumn. By my
life,

I would they had slain him there in
Edinburgh;

But I reprieve him; lo the thank I get,
To set the base folk muttering like

smoked bees
Of shame and love, and how love comes

of shame,
And how the queen loves shame that

comes of love;

Yet I say naught and go about my
ways,

And this mad fellow that I respited
Being forth and free, lo now the second

time
Ye take him by my bed in wait. Now

see
If I can get goodwill to pardon him;

With what a face may I crave leave of
men

To respite him, being young and a good
knight

And mad for perfect love? shall I go
say, —

*Dear lords, because ye took him shame-
fully,*

*Let him not die; because his fault is
foul,*

*Let him not die; because if he do live
I shall be held a harlot of all men,*

*I pray you, sweet sirs, that he may not
die?*

Mary Beaton. Madam, for me I would
not have him live;

Mine own heart's life was ended with
my fame,

And my life's breath will shortly follow
them;

So that I care not much; for you wot
well

I have lost love and shame and fame,
and all

To no good end; nor while he had his
life

Have I got good of him that was my
love.

Save that for courtesy (which may God quit)

He kissed me once as one might kiss for love

Out of great pity for me; saving this, He never did me grace in all his life.

And when you have slain him, madam, it may be

I shall get grace of him in some new way

In a new place, if God have care of us.

Queen. Bid you my brother to me presently. [*Exeunt Maries.*]

And yet the thing is pitiful; I would There were some way. To send him overseas,

Out past the long firths to the cold keen sea

Where the sharp sound is that one hears up here —

Or hold him in strong prison till he died —

He would die shortly — or to set him free

And use him softly till his brains were healed —

There is no way. Now never while I live

Shall we twain love together any more, Nor sit at rhyme as we were used to do, Nor each kiss other only with the eyes A great way off ere hand or lip could reach;

There is no way.

Enter Murray. O, you are welcome, sir;

You know what need I have; but I praise heaven,

Having such need, I have such help of you.

I do believe no queen God ever made Was better holpen than I look to be.

What! if two brethren love not heartily, Who shall be good to either one of them?

Murray. Madam, I have great joy of your good will.

Queen. I pray you, brother, use no courtesies:

I have some fear you will not suffer me When I shall speak. Fear is a fool, I think,

Yet hath he wit enow to fool my wits,

Being but a woman's. Do not answer me

Till you shall know; yet if you have a word

I shall be fain to hear it; but I think There is no word to help me; no man's word.

There be two things yet that should do me good, —

A speeding arm and a great heart. My lord,

I am soft-spirited as women are, And ye wot well I have no harder heart:

Yea, with my will I would not slay a thing,

But all should live right sweetly if I might;

So that man's blood-spilling lies hard on me.

I have a work yet for mine honor's sake,

A thing to do, God wot I know not how,

Nor how to crave it of you: nay, by heaven,

I will not shame myself to show it you: I have not heart.

Murray. Why, if it may be done With any honor, or with good men's excuse,

I shall well do it.

Queen. I would I wist that well.

Sir, do you love me?

Murray. Yea, you know I do.

Queen. In faith, you should well love me, for I love

The least man in your following for your sake

With a whole sister's heart.

Murray. Speak simply, madam;

I must obey you, being your bounden man.

Queen. Sir, so it is you know what things have been,

Even to the endangering of mine innocent name,

And by no fault, but by men's evil will.

If Chastelard have trial openly,

I am but shamed.

Murray. This were a wound indeed, If your good name should lie upon his lip.

Queen. I will the judges put him not to plead,
For my fame's sake; he shall not answer them.

Murray. What! think you he will speak against your fame?

Queen. I know not; men might feign belief of him
For hate of me; it may be he will speak;

In brief, I will not have him held to proof.

Murray. Well, if this be, what good is to be done?

Queen. Is there no way but he must speak to them,
Being had to trial plainly?

Murray. I think, none.

Queen. Now mark, my lord; I swear he will not speak.

Murray. It were the best if you could make that sure.

Queen. There is one way. Look, sir, he shall not do it:
Shall not, or will not, either is one way;

I speak as I would have you understand.

Murray. Let me not guess at you; speak certainly.

Queen. You will not mind me: let him be removed;
Take means to get me surety: there be means.

Murray. So, in your mind, I have to slay the man?

Queen. Is there a mean for me to save the man?

Murray. Truly I see no mean except your love.

Queen. What love is that, my lord? what think you of,
Talking of love and of love's mean in me

And of your guesses and of slaying him?

Why, I say naught, have naught to say: God help me!

I bid you but take surety of the man, Get him removed.

Murray. Come, come, be clear with me;

You bid me to despatch him privily.

Queen. God send me sufferance! I bid you, sir?

Nay, do not go: what matter if I did? Nathless I never bade you; no, by God.

Be not so wroth; you are my brother born;

Why do you dwell upon me with such eyes?

For love of God you should not bear me hard.

Murray. What! are you made of flesh?

Queen. Oh, now I see.

You had rather lose your wits to do me harm

Than keep sound wits to help me.

Murray. It is right strange;

The worst man living hath some fear, some love,

Holds somewhat dear a little for life's sake,

Keeps fast to some compassion; you have none;

You know of nothing that remembrance knows

To make you tender. I must slay the man?

Nay, I will do it.

Queen. Do, if you be not mad.

I am sorry for him; and he must needs die.

I would I were assured you hate me not:

I have no heart to slay him by my will.

I pray you think not bitterly of me.

Murray. Is it your pleasure such a thing were done?

Queen. Yea, by God's body is it, certainly.

Murray. Nay, for your love then, and for honor's sake,

This thing must be.

Queen. Yea, should I set you on?

Even for my love then, I beseech you, sir,

To seek him out, and lest he prate of me

To put your knife into him ere he come forth:

Meseems this were not such wild work to do.

Murray. I'll have him in the prison taken off.

Queen. I am bounden to you, even for my name's sake,
When that is done.

Murray. I pray you fear me not
Farewell. I would such things were not to do,
Or not for me; yea, not for any man.

[*Exit.*]

Queen. Alas! what honor have I to give thanks?
I would he had denied me: I had held my peace
Thenceforth forever; but he wrung out the word,
Caught it before my lip was fain of it—
It was his fault to put it in my mind,
Yea, and to feign a loathing of his fault.
Now is he about devising my love's death,
And nothing loath. Nay, since he must needs die,
Would he were dead and come alive again
And I might keep him safe! He doth live now,
And I may do what love I will to him;
But by to-morrow he will be stark dead,
Stark slain and dead; and for no sort of love
Will he so much as kiss me half a kiss.
Were this to do I would not do it again.

[*Re-enter MURRAY.*]

What! have you taken order? is it done?
It were impossible to do so soon.
Nay, answer me.
Murray. Madam, I will not do it.

Queen. How did you say? I pray, sir, speak again:
I know not what you said.
Murray. I say I will not;
I have thought thereof, and have made up my heart
To have no part in this: look you to it.

Queen. O, for God's sake! you will not have me shamed?
Murray. I will not dip my hand into your sin.

Queen. It were a good deed to deliver me.
I am but woman, of one blood with you,
A feeble woman; put me not to shame;
I pray you of your pity do me right.
Yea, and no fleck of blood shall cleave to you
For a just deed.

Murray. I know not: I will none.

Queen. Oh, you will never let him speak to them
To put me in such shame? Why, I should die
Out of pure shame and mine own burning blood;
Yea, my face feels the shame lay hold on it,
I am half burnt already in my thought.
Take pity of me. Think how shame slays a man;
How shall I live, then? would you have me dead?
I pray you for our dead dear father's sake,
Let not men mock at me. Nay, if he speak,
I shall be sung in mine own towns.
Have pity.
What! will you let men stone me in the ways?
Murray. Madam, I shall take pains the best I may
To save your honor, and what thing lieth in me
That will I do; but no close manslayings.
I will not have God's judgment gripe my throat
When I am dead, to hale me into hell
For a man's sake slain on this wise.
Take heed.
See you to that. [*Exit.*]

Queen. One of you maidens there
Bid my lord hither. Now, by Mary's soul,
He shall not die and bring me into shame.
There's treason in you like a fever, hot,
My holy-natured brother, cheek and eye:
You look red through with it; sick, honor-sick,

Specked with the blain of treason,
leper-like,—

A scrupulous fair traitor with clean
lips.

If one should sue to hell to do him
good,

He were as brotherly holpen as I am.

This man must live, and say no harm
of me;

I may reprieve and cast him forth;
yea, so—

This were the best; or if he die mid-
way—

Yea, any thing, so that he die not here.

[*To the MARIES within.*]

Fetch hither Darnley. Nay, ye gape
on me—

What! doth he sleep, or feeds, or plays
at games?

Why, I would see him; I am weary for
his sake;

Bid my lord in.—Nathless he will but
chide;

Nay, flee and laugh: what should one
say to him?

There were some word if one could hit
on it;

Some way to close with him: I wot not.
—Sir,

Enter DARNLEY.

Please it your love I have a suit to you.
Darnley. What sort of suit?

Queen. Nay, if you be not friends—
I have no suit towards mine enemies.

Darnley. Eh! do I look now like
your enemy?

Queen. You have a way of peering
under brow

I do not like. If you see any thing
In me that irks you, I will painfully
Labor to lose it: do but show me favor,
And as I am your faithful humble wife
This foolishness shall be removed
in me.

Darnley. Why do you laugh and
mock me with stretched hands?

Faith, I see no such thing.

Queen. That is well seen.
Come, I will take my heart between my
lips,

Use it not hardly. Sir, my suit begins;
That you would please to make me that
I am,

(In sooth I think I am) mistress and
queen

Of mine own people.

Darnley. Why, this is no suit;

This is a simple matter, and your own.

Queen. It was, before God made you
king of me.

Darnley. No king, by God's grace;
were I such a king,

I'd sell my kingdom for six roods of rye.

Queen. You are too sharp upon my
words; I would

Have leave of you to free a man con-
demned.

Darnley. What man is that, sweet?

Queen. Such a mad poor man

As God desires us use not cruelly.

Darnley. Is there no name a man
may call him by?

Queen. Nay, my fair master, what
fair game is this?

Why, you do know him: it is Chaste-
lard.

Darnley. Ay, is it soothly?

Queen. By my life, it is;
Sweet, as you tender me, so pardon him.

Darnley. As he doth tender you, so
pardon me;

For, if it were the mean to save my life,
He should not live a day.

Queen. Nay, shall not he?

Darnley. Look what an evil wit old
Fortune hath:

Why, I came here to get his time cut
off.

This second fault is meat for lewd
men's mouths;

You were best have him slain at once:
'tis hot.

Queen. Give me the warrant, and sit
down, my lord.

Why, I will sign it; what, I understand
How this must be. Should not my
name stand here?

Darnley. Yea, there, and here the
seal.

Queen. Ay, so you say.

Shall I say too what I am thinking of?

Darnley. Do, if you will.

Queen. I do not like your suit.

Darnley. 'Tis of no Frenchman fash-
ion.

Queen. No, God wot:

'Tis nowise great men's fashion in
French land
To clap a headsman's tabard on their
backs.

Darnley. No, madam?

Queen. No; I never wist of that.

Is it a month gone I did call you lord?
I chose you by no straying stroke of
sight,

But with my heart to love you heartily.
Did I wrong then? did mine eye draw
my heart?

I know not; sir, it may be I did wrong:
And yet to see you I should call it right
Even yet to love you; and would choose
again,

Again to choose you.

Darnley. There, I love you too,
Take that for sooth, and let me take
this hence.

Queen. O, do you think I hold you
off with words?

Why, take it then; there is my hand-
writing,
And here the hand that you shall slay
him with.

'Tis a fair hand, a maiden-colored one:
I doubt yet it has never slain a man.
You never fought yet save for game, I
wis.

Nay, thank me not, but have it from
my sight;
Go and make haste for fear he be got
forth:

It may be such a man is dangerous;
Who knows what friends he hath? and
by my faith

I doubt he hath seen some fighting, I
do fear

He hath fought and shed men's blood;
ye are wise men

That will not leave such dangerous
things alive;

'Twere well he died the sooner for your
sakes.

Pray you make haste; it is not fit he
live.

Darnley. What! will you let him die
so easily?

Queen. Why, God have mercy! what
way should one take

To please such people? there's some
cunning way,

Something I miss, out of my simple soul
What! must one say "Beseech you do
no harm,"

Or "for my love, sweet cousins, be not
hard,"

Or "let him live but till the vane come
round"—

Will such things please you? well then,
have your way;

Sir, I desire you, kneeling down with
tears,

With sighs and tears, fair sir, require
of you,

Considering of my love I bear this man,
Just for my love's sake let him not be
hanged

Before the sundown; do thus much for
me,

To have a queen's prayers follow after
you.

Darnley. I know no need for you to
gibe at me.

Queen. Alack! what heart then shall
I have to jest?

There is no woman jests in such a
wise—

*For the shame's sake I pray you hang
him not,*

*Seeing how I love him, save indeed in
silk,*

Sweet twisted silk of my sad handiwork.
Nay, and you will not do so much for
me;

You vex your lip, biting the blood and
all:

Were this so hard, and you compassion-
ate?

I am in sore case then, and will weep
indeed.

Darnley. What do you mean to cast
such gibes at me?

Queen. Woe's me, and will you turn
my tears to thorns?

Nay, set your eyes a little in my face:
See, do I weep? what will you make of
me?

Will you not swear I love this prisoner?
Ye are wise, and ye will have it; yet

for me

I wist not of it. We are but feeble
fools,

And love may catch us when we lie
asleep,

And yet God knows we know not this
a whit.

Come, look on me, swear you believe
it not :

It may be I will take your word for that.

Darnley. Do you not love him? nay,
but verily?

Queen. Now then, make answer to me
verily,

Which of us twain is wiser? for my
part

I will not swear I love not, if you will;

Ye be wise men and many men, my
lords,

And ye will have me love him, ye will
swear

That I do love him; who shall say ye
lie?

Look on your paper; maybe I have
wept:

Doubtless I love your hanged man in
my heart.

What! is the writing smutched or gone
awry?

Or blurred — ay, surely so much — with
one tear,

One little sharp tear strayed on it by
chance?

Come, come, the man is deadly danger-
ous;

Let him die presently.

Darnley. You do not love him;
Well, yet he need not die; it were right
hard

To hang the fool because you love him
not.

Queen. You have keen wits and there-
to courtesy

To catch me with. No, let this man
not die;

It were no such perpetual praise to you
To be his doomsman, and in doglike
wise

Bite his brief life in twain.

Darnley. Truly it were not.

Queen. Then for your honor and my
love of you

(Oh, I do love you! but you know not,
sweet,

You shall see how much), think you for
their sake

He may go free?
Darnley. How, freely forth of us?

But yet he loves you, and being mad
with love

Makes matter for base mouths to chew
upon:

'Twere best he live not yet.

Queen. Will you say that?

Darnley. Why should he live to breed
you bad reports?

Let him die first.

Queen. Sweet, for your sake, not so.

Darnley. Fret not yourself to pity;
let him die.

Queen. Come, let him live a little; it
shall be

A grace to us.

Darnley. By God, he dies at once.

Queen. Now, by God's mother, if I
respice him,

Though you were all the race of you in
one,

And had more tongues than hairs to
cry on me,

He should not lose a hair.

Darnley. This is mere mercy —

But you thank God you love him not a
whit?

Queen. It shall be what it please;
and if I please

It shall be any thing. Give me the war-
rant.

Darnley. Nay, for your sake and love
of you, not I,

To make it dangerous.

Queen. Oh, God's pity, sir!

You are tender of me; will you serve
me so,

Against mine own will, shew me so
much love,

Do me good service that I loath being
done,

Out of pure pity?

Darnley. Nay, your word shall stand.

Queen. What makes you gape so
beastlike after blood?

Were you not bred up on some hang-
man's hire,

And dieted with fleshmeats at his hand,
And fed into a fool? Give me that
paper.

Darnley. Now for that word I will not.

Queen. Nay, sweet love,

For your own sake be just a little wise;
Come, I beseech you.

To make you game and laughter: nay,
your eyes

Threaten as unto blood. What will
you do

To make men take your sweet word?
Pitiful —

You are pitiful as he that's hired for
death,

And loves the slaying yet better than
the hire.

Queen. You are wise that live to
threat and tell me so:

Do you love life too much?

Darnley. Oh, now you are sweet,
Right tender now: you love not blood
nor death,

You are too tender.

Queen. Yea, too weak, too soft:
Sweet, do not mock me, for my love's
sake; see

How soft a thing I am. Will you be
hard?

The heart you have, has it no sort of
fear?

Darnley. Take off your hand, and let
me go my way,

And do my deed; and when the doing
is past

I will come home, and teach you tender
things

Out of my love till you forget my
wrath.

I will be angry when I see good need,
And will grow gentle after,—fear not
that;

You shall get no wrong of my wrong-
doing.

So I take leave.

Queen. Take what you will; take all.
You have taken half my heart away
with words:

Take all I have, and take no leave; I
have

No leave to give: yea, shortly shall
lack leave,

I think, to live; but I crave none of
you;

I would have none: yet for the love I
have,

If I get ever a mean to show it you,
I pray God put you some day in my
hand

That you may take that too.

Darnley. Well, as he please:
God keep you in such love; and so
farewell. [*Exit.*]

Queen. So fare I as your lover, but
not well. —

Ah, sweet, if God be ever good to me
To put you in my hand! I am come to
shame;

Let me think now, and let my wits not
go;

God, for dear mercy, let me not forget
Why I should be so angry: the dull
blood

Beats at my face, and blinds me; I am
chafed to death,

And I am shamed; I shall go mad and
die.

Truly I think I did kneel down, did
pray,

Yea, weep (who knows?) it may be —
all for that.

Yea, if I wept not, this was blood brake
forth

And burnt mine eyelids; I will have
blood back,

And wash them cool in the hottest of
his heart,

Or I will slay myself: I cannot tell.

I have given gold for brass, and lo, the
pay

Cleaves to my fingers; there's no way
to mend, —

Not while life stays: would God that
it were gone!

The fool will feed upon my fame, and
laugh;

Till one seal up his tongue and lips
with blood,

He carries half my honor and good
name

Between his teeth. Lord God, mine
head will fail!

When have I done thus since I was
alive?

And these ill times will deal but ill
with me —

My old love slain, and never a new to
help,

And my wits gone, and my blithe use
of life,

And all the grace was with me. Love
— perchance

If I save love I shall well save myself.

I could find heart to bid him take such fellows,
 And kill them to my hand. I was the fool
 To sue to these, and shame myself: God knows
 I was a queen born, I will hold their heads
 Here in my hands for this. Which of you waits?
Enter MARY BEATON and MARY CARMICHAEL.
 No maiden of them?— what, no more than this?
Mary Carmichael. Madam, the lady Seyton is gone forth;
 She is ill at heart with watching.
Queen. Ay, at heart—
 All girls must have such tender sides to the heart
 They break for one night's watching, ache to death
 For an hour's pity, for a half-hour's love—
 Wear out before the watches, die by dawn,
 And ride at noon to burial. God's my pity!
 Where's Hamilton? doth she ail too? at heart,
 I warrant her at heart.
Mary Beaton. I know not, madam.
Queen. What! sick or dead? I am well holpen of you:
 Come hither to me. What pale blood you have!
 Is it for fear you turn such cheeks to me?
 Why, if I were so loving, by my hand, I would have set my head upon the chance,
 And loosed him though I died. What will you do?
 Have you no way?
Mary Beaton. None but your mercy.
Queen. Ay?
 Why, then the thing is piteous. Think, for God's sake—
 Is there no loving way to fetch him forth?
 Nay, what a white thin-blooded thing is love,

To help no more than this doth! Were I in love,
 I would unbar the ways to-night, and then
 Laugh death to death to-morrow, mock him dead;
 I think you love well with one half your heart,
 And let fear keep the other. Hark you now:
 You said there was some friend durst break my bars—
 Some Scotch name—faith, as if I wist of it!
 Ye have such heavy wits to help one with—
 Some man that had some mean to save him by—
 Tush, I must be at pains for you!
Mary Beaton. Nay, madam,
 It were no boot; he will not be let forth.
Queen. I say, the name. Oh, Robert Erskine—yea,
 A fellow of some heart: what saith he?
Mary Beaton. Madam,
 The thing was sound all through, yea, all went well,
 But for all prayers that we could make to him
 He would not fly: we cannot get him forth.
Queen. Great God! that men should have such wits as this!
 I have a mind to let him die for that;
 And yet I wot not. Said he, he loathed his life?
Mary Beaton. He says your grace given would scathe yourself,
 And little grace for such a grace as that
 Be with the little of the life he kept
 To cast off some time more unworthily.
Queen. God help me! what should wise folk do with him?
 These men be weaker-witted than mere fools
 When they fall mad once; yet by Mary's soul
 I am sorrier for him than for men right wise.
 God wot a fool that were more wise than he

Would love me something worse than
 Chastelard,
 Ay, and his own soul better. Do you
 think
 (There's no such other sort of fool
 alive)
 That he may live?
Mary Beaton. Yea, by God's mercy,
 madam,
 To your great praise and honor from
 all men
 If you should keep him living.
Queen. By God's light,
 I have good will to do it. Are you
 sure,
 If I would pack him with a pardon
 hence,
 He would speak well of me — not hint
 and halt,
 Smile and look back, sigh and say love
 runs out,
 But times have been — with some loose
 laugh cut short,
 Bit off at lip — eh?
Mary Beaton. No, by heaven he
 would not!
Queen. You know how quickly one
 may be belied —
 Faith, you should know it; I never
 thought the worst;
 One may touch love, and come with
 clean hands off —
 But you should know it. What! he
 will not fly —
 Not though I wink myself asleep, turn
 blind —
 Which that I will I say not?
Mary Beaton. Nay, not he;
 We had good hope to bring him well
 aboard,
 Let him slip safe down by the firths to
 sea,
 Out under Leith by night-setting, and
 thence
 Take ship for France, and serve there
 out of sight
 In the new wars.
Queen. Ay, in the new French wars —
 You wist thereof too, madam, with good
 leave —
 A goodly bait to catch mine honor with
 And let me wake up with my name bit
 through.

I had been much bounden to you twain,
 methinks,
 But for my knight's sake and his love's;
 by God,
 He shall not die in God's despite nor
 mine.
 Call in our chief lords; bid one see to
 it, —
 Ay, and make haste.
*[Exeunt MARY BEATON and MARY
 CARMICHAEL.]*
 Now shall I try their teeth:
 I have done with fear; now nothing
 but pure love
 And power and pity shall have part in
 me;
 I will not throw them such a spirit in
 flesh
 To make their prey on. Though he be
 mad indeed,
 It is the goodliest madness ever
 smote
 Upon man's heart. A kingly knight —
 in faith,
 Meseems my face can yet make faith
 in men,
 And break their brains with beauty:
 for a word,
 An eyelid's twitch, an eye's turn, tie
 them fast
 And make their souls cleave to me.
 God be thanked,
 This air has not yet curdled all the
 blood
 That went to make me fair. An hour
 agone,
 I thought I had been forgotten of men's
 love
 More than dead women's faces are
 forgot
 Of after lovers. All men are not of
 earth:
 For all the frost of fools and this cold
 land,
 There be some yet catch fever of my
 face
 And burning for mine eyes' sake. I
 did think
 My time was gone when men would
 dance to death
 As to a music, and lie laughing down
 In the grave and take their funerals for
 their feasts,

To get one kiss of me. I have some strength yet,
 Though I lack-power on men that lack men's blood.
 Yea, and God wot I will be merciful;
 For all the foolish hardness round my heart
 That tender women miss of to their praise,
 They shall not say but I had grace to give
 Even for love's sake. Why, let them take their way:
 What ails it them though I be soft or hard?
 Soft hearts would weep and weep, and let men die
 For very mercy and sweet-heartedness;
 I that weep little for my pity's sake,
 I have the grace to save men. Let fame go —
 I care not much what shall become of fame,
 So I save love, and do mine own soul right;
 I'll have my mercy help me to revenge
 On all the crew of them. How will he look,
 Having my pardon! I shall have sweet thanks
 And love of good men for my mercy's love, —
 Yea, and be quit of these I hate to death,
 With one good deed.
Enter the MARIES.
Mary Beaton. Madam, the lords are here.
Queen. Stand you about me, I will speak to them.
 I would the whole world stood up in my face,
 And heard what I shall say. Bid them come in.
Enter MURRAY, RANDOLPH, MORTON, LINDSAY, and other Lords.
 Hear you, fair lords, I have a word to you;
 There is one thing I would fain understand, —
 If I be queen, or no; for by my life
 Methinks I am growing unqueently. No man speak?

Pray you take note, sweet lord ambassador,
 I am no queen: I never was born queen,
 Alack, that one should fool us in this wise!
 Take up my crown, sir, I will none of it
 Till it hath bells on as a fool's cap hath.
 Nay, who will have it? no man take it up?
 Was there none worthy to be shamed but I?
 Here are enow good faces, good to crown;
 Will you be king, fair brother? or you, my lord?
 Give me a spinner's curch, a wisp of reed,
 Any mean thing; but, God's love, no more gold,
 And no more shame: let boys throw dice for it,
 Or cast it to the grooms for tennis-play,
 For I will none.
Murray. What would your highness have?
Queen. Yea, yea, I said I was no majesty;
 I shall be shortly fallen out of grace.
 What would I have? I would have leave to live;
 Perchance I shall not shortly: nay, for me
 That have no leave to respite other lives
 To keep mine own life were small praise enow.
Murray. Your majesty hath power to respite men,
 As we well wot; no man saith otherwise.
Queen. What! is this true? 'tis a thing wonderful —
 So great I cannot be well sure of it.
 Strange that a queen should find such grace as this
 At such lords' hands as ye be, — such great lords:
 I pray you let me get assured again,
 Lest I take jest for truth, and shame myself,
 And make you mirth: to make your mirth of me,
 God wot it were small pains to you, my lords,

But much less honor. I may send re-
prieve —

With your sweet leaves I may?

Murray. Assuredly.

Queen. Lo, now, what grace is this I
have of you!

I had a will to respite Chastelard,
And would not do it for very fear of
you :

Look you, I ~~wist~~ not ye were merciful.

Morton. Madam —

Queen. My lord, you have a word to
me?

Doth it displease you such a man should
live?

Morton. 'Twere a mad mercy in your
majesty

To lay no hand upon his second fault
And let him thrice offend you.

Queen. Ay, my lord?

Morton. It were well done to muffle
lewd men's mouths

By casting of his head into their laps :
It were much best.

Queen. Yea, truly were it so?

But if I will not, yet I will not, sir,
For all the mouths in Scotland. Now,
by heaven,

As I am pleased he shall not die, but
live,

So shall ye be. There is no man shall
die,

Except it please me; and no man shall
say,

Except it please me, if I do ill or well.

Which of you now will set his will to
mine?

Not you, nor you I think, nor none of
you,

Nor no man living that loves living well.
Let one stand forth and smite me with
his hand,

Wring my crown off and cast it under-
foot,

And he shall get my respite back of me,
And no man else: he shall bid live or
die,

And no man else; and he shall be my
lord,

And no man else. What! will not one
be king?

Will not one here lay hold upon my
state?

I am queen of you for all things come
and gone.

Nay, my chief lady, and no meaner
one,

The chiefest of my maidens, shall bear
this,

And give it to my prisoner for a grace.
Who shall deny me? who shall do me
wrong?

Bear greeting to the lord of Chastelard,
And this withal for respite of his life,

**For by my head he shall die no such
way:**

Nay, sweet, no words, but hence and
back again.

[*Exit* MARY BEATON.

Farewell, dear lords; ye have shown
grace to me,

And some time I will thank you as I
may;

Till when, think well of me and what is
done.

ACT V.—CHASTELARD.

SCENE I.—*Before Holyrood. A crowd
of people; among them Soldiers, Bur-
gesses, a Preacher, etc.*

First Citizen. They are not out yet.
Have you seen the man?

What manner of man?

Second Citizen. Shall he be hanged,
or no?

There was a fellow hanged some three
days gone,

Wept the whole way: think you this
man shall die

In better sort, now?

First Citizen. Eh, these shawm-players
That walk before strange women, and
make songs!

How should they die well?

Third Citizen. Is it sooth men say
Our dame was wont to kiss him on the
face

In lewd folk's sight?

First Citizen. Yea, saith one, all day
long

He used to sit and jangle words in
rhyme

To suit with shakes of faint adulterous
sound

Some French lust in men's ears; she
made songs too,
Soft things to feed sin's amorous mouth
upon, —

Delicate sounds for dancing at in hell.
Fourth Citizen. Is it priest Black that
he shall have by him
When they do come?

Third Citizen. Ah! by God's leave,
not so;
If the knave show us his peeled onion's
head

And that damned flagging jowl of his —
Second Citizen. Nay, sirs,
Take heed of words; moreover, please
it you,
This man hath no pope's part in him.

Third Citizen. I say
That if priest whore's-friend with the
lewd thief's cheek
Show his foul blinking face to shame
all ours,

It goes back fouler; well, one day hell's
fire
Will burn him black indeed.

A Woman. What kind of man?
'Tis yet great pity of him if he be
Goodly enow for this queen's paramour.
A French lord overseas? what doth he
here,

With Scotch folk here?

First Citizen. Fair mistress, I think
well,
He doth so at some times that I were
fain

To do as well.

The Woman. Nay, then he will not
die.

First Citizen. Why, see you, if one
eat a piece of bread
Baked as it were a certain prophet's
way,

Not upon coals, now — you shall appre-
hend —

If defiled bread be given a man to eat,
Being thrust into his mouth, why he
shall eat,

And with good hap shall eat; but if
now, say,

One steal this, bread and beastliness
and all,

When scarcely for pure hunger flesh
and bone

Cleave one to other — why, if he steal
to eat,

Be it even the filthiest feeding — though
the man

Be famine-flayed of flesh and skin, I say
He shall be hanged.

Third Citizen. Nay, stolen said you,
sir?

See, God bade eat abominable bread,
And freely was it eaten — for a sign
This, for a sign — and doubtless as did
God,

So may the devil; bid one eat freely
and live,

Not for a sign.

Second Citizen. Will you think thus
of her?

But wherefore should they get this fel-
low slain

If he be clear toward her?

Third Citizen. Sir, one must see
The day comes when a woman sheds
her sin

As a bird moults; and she being shifted
so,

The old mate of her old feather pecks
at her

To get the right bird back; then she
being stronger

Picks out his eyes — eh?

Second Citizen. Like enough to be;
But if it be — Is not one preaching
there

With certain folk about him?

First Citizen. Yea, the same
Who preached a month since from Eze-
kiel

Concerning these twain, — this our
queen that is,

And her that was, and is not now so
much

As queen over hell's worm.

Third Citizen. Ay, said he not,
This was Aholah, the first one of these,
Called sisters only for a type — being
twain,

Twain Maries, no whit Nazarene? the
first

Bred out of Egypt like the water-worm
With sides in wet green places baked
with slime

And festered flesh that steams against
the sun;

A plague among all people, and a type
Set as a flake upon a leper's fell.

First Citizen. Yea, said he, and unto
her the men went in,

The men of Pharaoh's, beautiful with
red

And with red gold, fair foreign-footed
men,

The bountiful fair men, the courteous
men,

The delicate men with delicate feet, that
went

Curling their small beards Agag-fashion,
yea,

Pruning their mouths to nibble words
behind

With pecking at God's skirts—small
broken oaths

Fretted to shreds between most dainty
lips,

And underbreath some praise of Ash-
taroth

Sighed laughingly.

Second Citizen. Was he not under
guard

For the good word?

First Citizen. Yea, but now forth
again—

And of the latter said he—there being
two,

The first Aholah, which interpreted—

Third Citizen. But, of this latter?

First Citizen. Well, of her he said
How she made letters for Chaldæan
folk

And men that came forth of the wilder-
ness

And all her sister's chosen men; yea,
she

Kept not her lip from any sin of
hers,

But multiplied in whoredoms toward
all these

That hate God mightily; for these, he
saith,

These are the fair French people, and
these her kin

Sought out of England with her love-
letters

To bring them to her kiss of love; and
thus

With a prayer made that God would
break such love

Ended some while; then crying out for
strong wrath

Spake with a great voice after: This is
she,

Yea the lewd woman, yea the same
woman

That gat bruised breasts in Egypt, when
strange men

Swart from great suns, foot-burnt with
angry soils,

And strewn with sand of gaunt Chal-
dæan miles,

Poured all their love upon her: she
shall drink

The Lord's cup of derision that is
filled

With drunkenness and sorrow, great of
sides

And deep to drink in till the dreg drips
out:

Yea, and herself with the twain shards
thereof

Pluck off her breasts; so said he.

Fourth Citizen. See that stir—
Are not they come?

Third Citizen. There wants an hour
of them.

Draw near, and let us hearken; he will
speak

Surely some word of this.

Second Citizen. What saith he now?

The Preacher. The mercy of a harlot
is a sword,

And her mouth sharper than a flame of
fire.

SCENE II.—*In Prison.*

Chastelard. So here my time shuts
up; and the last light

Has made the last shade in the world
for me.

The sunbeam that was narrow like a
leaf

Has turned a hand, and the hand
stretched to an arm,

And the arm has reached the dust on
the floor, and made

A maze of motes with paddling fingers.
Well,

I knew not that a man so sure to die
Could care so little; a bride-night's
lustiness

Leaps in my veins as light fire under a
wind:
As if I felt a kindling beyond death
Of some new joys far outside of me
yet;
Sweet sound, sweet smell and touch of
things far out
Sure to come soon. I wonder will
death be
Even all it seems now? or the talk of
hell
And wretched changes of the worn-out
soul
Nailed to decaying flesh, shall that be
true?
Or is this like the forethought of deep
sleep
Felt by a tired man? Sleep were good
enough—
Shall sleep be all? But I shall not for-
get
For any sleep this love bound upon
me—
For any sleep or quiet ways of death.
Ah! in my weary dusty space of sight
Her face will float with heavy scents of
hair
And fire of subtle amorous eyes, and
lips
More hot than wine, full of sweet
wicked words
Babbled against mine own lips, and
long hands
Spread out, and pale bright throat and
pale bright breasts,
Fit to make all men mad. I do believe
This fire shall never quite burn out to
the ash,
And leave no heat and flame upon my
dust
For witness where a man's heart was
burnt up.
For all Christ's work this Venus is not
quelled,
But reddens at the mouth with blood of
men,
Sucking between small teeth the sap o'
the veins,
Dabbling with death her little tender
lips—
A bitter beauty, poisonous-pearled
mouth.
I am not fit to live but for love's sake,

So I were best die shortly. Ah! fair
love,
Fair fearful Venus made of deadly
foam,
I shall escape you somehow with my
death,—
Your splendid supple body and mouth
on fire,
And Paphian breath that bites the lips
with heat.
I had best die.
Enter MARY BEATON.
What! is my death's time come,
And you the friend to make death kind
to me?
'Tis sweetly done; for I was sick for
this.
Mary Beaton. Nay, but see here;
nay, for you shall not die:
She has reprieved you; look, her name
to that,
A present respite; I was sure of her:
You are quite safe: here, take it in your
hands:
I am faint with the end of pain. Read
there.
Chastelard. Reprieve?
Wherefore reprieve? Who has done
this to me?
Mary Beaton. I never feared but God
would have you live,
Or I knew well God must have punished
me;
But I feared nothing, had no sort of fear.
What makes you stare upon the seal so
hard?
Will you not read now?
Chastelard. A reprieve of life—
Reprieving me from living. Nay, by
God,
I count one death a bitter thing enough.
Mary Beaton. See what she writes;
your love; for love of you;
Out of her love; a word to save your
life:
But I knew this too though you love me
not:
She is your love; I knew that: yea, by
heaven.
Chastelard. You knew I had to live
and be reprieved:
Say I were bent to die now?
Mary Beaton. Do not die,

<p>For her sweet love's sake ; not for pity of me, You would not bear with life for me one hour ; But for hers only. <i>Chastelard.</i> Nay, I love you well, I would not hurt you for more lives than one. But for this fair-faced paper of reprieve, We'll have no riddling to make death shift sides : Look, here ends one of us. [<i>Tearing it.</i> For her I love, She will not anger heaven with slaying me ; For me, I am well quit of loving her ; For you, I pray you be well comforted, Seeing in my life no man gat good by me, And by my death no hurt is any man's. <i>Mary Beaton.</i> And I that loved you ? nay, I loved you ; nay, Why should your like be pitied when they love ? Her hard heart is not yet so hard as yours, Nor God's hard heart. I care not if you die. These bitter madmen are not fit to live. I will not have you touch me, speak to me, Nor take farewell of you. See you die well, Or death will play with shame for you, and win, And laugh you out of life. I am right glad I never am to see you any more, For I should come to hate you easily ; I would not have you live. [<i>Exit.</i> <i>Chastelard.</i> She has cause enow. I did this wretched waiting had an end, For I wax feebler than I was : God knows I had a mind once to have saved this flesh, And made life one with shame. It marvels me This girl that loves me should desire so much To have me sleep with shame for bed- fellow</p>	<p>A whole life's space ; she would be glad to die To escape such life. It may be, too, her love Is but an amorous quarrel with herself, Not love of me, but her own wilful soul ; Then she will live, and be more glad of this Than girls of their own will and their heart's love Before love mars them : so God go with her ! For mine own love — I wonder will she come Sad at her mouth a little, with drawn cheeks And eyelids wrinkled up ? or hot and quick To lean her head on mine and leave her lips Deep in my neck ? For surely she must come ; And I should fare the better to be sure What she will do. But as it please my sweet ; For some sweet thing she must do if she come, Seeing how I have to die. Now three years since, This had not seemed so good an end for me ; But in some wise all things wear round betimes, And wind up well. Yet doubtless she might take A will to come my way, and hold my hands, And kiss me some three kisses, throat, mouth, eyes, And say some soft three words to soften death : I do not see how this should break her ease. Nay, she will come to get her warrant back : By this no doubt she is sorely penitent, Her fit of angry mercy well blown out, And her wits cool again. She must have chafed A great while through for anger to be- come So like pure pity ; they must have fret- ted her</p>
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Nigh mad for anger : or it may be mistrust,
 She is so false ; yea, to my death I think
 She will not trust me ; alas the hard sweet heart !
 As if my lips could hurt her any way
 But by too keenly kissing of her own !
 Ah ! false poor sweet fair lips that keep no faith,
 They shall not catch mine false or dangerous ;
 They must needs kiss me one good time, albeit
 They love me not at all. Lo, here she comes,
 For the blood leaps and catches at my face ;
 There go her feet, and tread upon my heart ;
 Now shall I see what way I am to die.
Enter the QUEEN.
Queen. What ! is one here ? Speak to me, for God's sake :
 Where are you lain ?
Chastelard. Here, madam, at your hand.
Queen. Sweet lord, what sore pain have I had for you,
 And been most patient ! — Nay, you are not bound.
 If you be gentle to me, take my hand.
 Do you not hold me the worst heart in the world ?
 Nay, you must needs ; but say not yet you do.
 I am worn so weak, I know not how I live :
 Reach me your hand.
Chastelard. Take comfort and good heart ;
 All will find end ; this is some grief to you,
 But you shall overlive it. Come, fair love ;
 Be of fair cheer : I say you have done no wrong.
Queen. I will not be of cheer : I have done a thing
 That will turn fire and burn me. Tell me not ;
 If you will do me comfort, whet your sword.

But if you hate me, tell me of soft things,
 For I hate these, and bitterly. Look up ;
 Am I not mortal to be gazed upon ?
Chastelard. Yea, mortal, and not hateful.
Queen. O lost heart !
 Give me some mean to die by.
Chastelard. Sweet, enough.
 You have made no fault ; life is not worth a world,
 That you should weep to take it : would mine were,
 And I might give you a world-worthier gift
 Than one poor head that love has made a spoil ;
 Take it for jest, and weep not : let me go,
 And think I died of chance or malady.
 Nay, I die well ; one dies not best abed.
Queen. My warrant to reprieve you — that you saw ?
 That came between your hands ?
Chastelard. Yea, not long since.
 It seems you have no will to let me die.
Queen. Alas ! you know I wrote it with my heart,
 Out of pure love ; and since you were in bonds,
 I have had such grief for love's sake and my heart's, —
 Yea, by my life I have, — I could not choose
 But give love way a little. Take my hand ;
 You know it would have pricked my heart's blood out
 To write reprieve with.
Chastelard. Sweet, your hands are kind ;
 Lay them about my neck, upon my face,
 And tell me not of writing.
Queen. Nay, by heaven,
 I would have given you mine own blood to drink
 If that could heal you of your soul-sickness.
 Yea, they know that, they curse me for your sake,
 Rail at my love — Would God their heads were lopped,

And we twain left together this side
death!

But look you, sweet, if this my warrant
hold

You are but dead and shamed; for you
must die,

And they will slay you shamefully by
force

Even in my sight.

Chastelard. Faith, I think so they
will.

Queen. Nay, they would slay me too,
cast stones at me,

Drag me alive; they have eaten poison-
ous words,

They are mad, and have no shame.

Chastelard. Ay, like enough.

Queen. Would God my heart were
greater! but God wot

I have no heart to bear with fear, and
die.

Yea, and I cannot help you: or I
know

I should be nobler, bear a better heart:
But as this stands — I pray you for good
love,

As you hold honor a costlier thing than
life —

Chastelard. Well?

Queen. Nay, I would not be denied
for shame;

In brief, I pray you give me that again.

Chastelard. What, my reprieve?

Queen. Even so; deny me not,

For your sake mainly: yea, by God you
know

How fain I were to die in your death's
stead.

For your name's sake. This were no
need to swear.

Lest we be mocked to death with a
reprieve,

And so both die, being shamed. What!
shall I swear?

What, if I kiss you? must I pluck it
out?

You do not love me: no, nor honor.
Come,

I know you have it about you: give it
me.

Chastelard. I cannot yield you such a
thing again;

Not as I had it.

Queen. A coward? what shift now?
Do such men make such cravens?

Chastelard. Chide me not:

Pity me that I cannot help my heart.

Queen. Heaven mend mine eyes that
took you for a man!

What, is it sewn into your flesh? take
heed —

Nay, but for shame — what have you
done with it?

Chastelard. Why, there it lies, torn up.

Queen. God help me, sir!

Have you done this?

Chastelard. Yea, sweet; what should
I do?

Did I not know you to the bone, my
sweet?

God speed you well! you have a goodly
lord.

Queen. My love, sweet love, you are
more fair than he,

Yea, fairer many times: I love you
much,

Sir, know you that?

Chastelard. I think I know that well.

Sit here a little till I feel you through

In all my breath and blood for some
sweet while.

O gracious body that mine arms have
had,

And hair my face has felt on it! grave
eyes,

And low thick lids that keep since years
agone

In the blue sweet of each particular
vein

Some special print of me! I am right
glad

That I must never feel a bitterer thing
Than your soft curled-up shoulder and
amorous arms

From this time forth; nothing can hap
to me

Less good than this for all my whole
life through.

I would not have some new pain after
this

Come spoil the savor. Oh, your round
bird's throat,

More soft than sleep or singing; your
calm cheeks,

Turned bright, turned wan with kisses
hard and hot;

The beautiful color of your deep carved
lips
 Made of a red rose that had changed to
white
 That mouth mine own birds half the
sweetness of
 Yea, my heart birds the sweetness of
it, whence
 My life began in me, — mine that ends
here
 Because you have no mercy; nay, you
know
 You never could have mercy. My fair
love
 Kiss me again, God loves you not the
less
 Why should one woman have all goodly
things?
 You have all beauty; let mean women's
lips
 Be pitiful, and speak truth: they will
not be
 Such perfect things as yours. Be not
ashamed
 That hands not made like these that
snare men's souls
 Should do men good, give alms, relieve
men's pain:
 You have the better, being more fair
than they;
 They are half foul, being rather good
than fair;
 You are quite fair: to be quite fair is
best.
 Why, two nights hence I dreamed that
I could see
 In through your bosom, under the left
flower,
 And there was a round hollow, and at
heart
 A little red snake sitting, without spot,
 That bit — like this, and sucked up
sweet — like this,
 And curled its lithe light body right
and left,
 And quivered like a woman in act to
love.
 Then there was some low fluttered talk
i' the lips,
 Faint sound of soft fierce words caressing
them —
 Like a fair woman's when her love gets
way.

Ah! your old kiss — I know the ways
of it:
 Let the lips cling a little. Take them
off,
 And speak some word, or I go mad
with love.
Queen. Will you not have my chap-
 lain come to you?
Chastelard. Some better thing of
 yours, — some handkerchief,
 Some fringe of scarf to make confes-
 sion to.
 You had some book about you that fell
out —
Queen. A little written book of Ron-
 sard's rhymes,
 His gift. I wear in there for love of
him —
 See, here between our feet.
Chastelard. Ay, my old lord's, —
 The sweet chief poet, my dear friend
long since?
 Give me the book. Lo you, this verse
of his:
With coming lilies in late April came
Her body, fashioned whiter for their
shame;
And roses, touched with blood since Adon
bled,
From her fair color filled their lips with
red:
 A goodly praise: I could not praise
you so.
 I read that while your marriage-feast
went on.
 Leave me this book, I pray you: I
would read
 The hymn of death here over ere I
die;
 I shall know soon how much he knew
of death
 When that was written. One thing I
know now:
 I shall not die with half a heart at
least,
 Nor shift my face, nor weep my fault
alive;
 Nor swear, if I might live, and do new
deeds,
 I would do better. Let me keep the
book.
Queen. Yea, keep it: as would God
 you had kept your life

Out of mine eyes and hands! I am
wringing to the heart:

This hour feels dry and bitter in my
mouth,

As if its sorrow were my body's food
More than my soul's. There are bad
thoughts in me,—

Most bitter fancies biting me like birds
That tear each other. Suppose you
need not die?

Chastelard. You know I cannot live
for two hours more.

Our fate was made thus ere our days
were made:

Will you fight fortune for so small a
grief?

But for one thing I were full fain of
death.

Queen. What thing is that?

Chastelard. None need to name the
thing.

Why, what can death do with me fit to
fear?

For if I sleep I shall not weep awake;
Or, if their saying be true of things to
come,

Though hell be sharp, in the worst ache
of it

I shall be eased, so God will give me
back

Sometimes one golden gracious sight
of you—

The aureole woven flower-like through
your hair,

And in your lips the little laugh as red
As when it came upon a kiss and ceased,

Touching my mouth.

Queen. As I do now, this way,
With my heart after: would I could
shed tears!

Tears should not fail when the heart
shudders so.

But your bad thought?

Chastelard. Well, such a thought as
this:

It may be, long time after I am dead,
For all you are, you may see bitter
days;

God may forget you, or be wroth with
you:

Then shall you lack a little help of me,
And I shall feel your sorrow touching
you,

A happy sorrow, though I may not
touch,—

I that would fain be turned to flesh
again,

Fain get back life to give up life for
you,

To shed my blood for help, that long
ago

You shed and were not holpen; and
your heart

Will ache for help and comfort, yea for
love,

And find less love than mine—for I do
think

You never will be loved thus in your
life.

Queen. It may be man will never love
me more;

For I am sure I shall not love man
twice.

Chastelard. I know not: men must
love you in life's spite;

For you will always kill them; man by
man

Your lips will bite them dead; yea,
though you would,

You shall not spare one; all will die of
you;

I cannot tell what love shall do with
these,

But I for all my love shall have no might
To help you more, mine arms and hands
no power

To fasten on you more. This cleaves
my heart,

That they shall never touch your body
more.

But for your grief—you will not have
to grieve;

For being in such poor eyes so beauti-
ful

It must needs be as God is more than I
So much more love he hath of you than
mine;

Yea, God shall not be bitter with my
love,

Seeing she is so sweet.

Queen. Ah! my sweet fool,
Think you, when God will ruin me for
sin,

My face of color shall prevail so much
With him, so soften the toothed iron's
edge

- To save my throat a scar? nay, I am
 sure
 I shall ne summer make.
Chastelard. This is sure grief:
 The shadow of your joy do my death
 Make to be mine: in joy all sweet
 things
 Throw out such little shadows of them-
 selves
 Leave still your eyes behind. You
 ne like me?
 Should your heart be that I may kiss
 all things
 Where mine shall be cut through: sup-
 pose my heart
 The shadow of that so sweet a throat
 in vain
 To be other men should see it turn soft:
 As it is soft of me?
Queen. I am quite sure
 I shall ne see you some day. *Chastelard:*
 I am quite certain.
Chastelard. Do not think such things:
 Lost all my heart would's memories of
 you be
 As heavy as this thought.
Queen. I will not grieve you:
 Forgive me that my thoughts were sick
 with grief.
 What can I do to give you ease at
 heart?
 Shall I kiss now? I pray you, have no
 fear
 But that I love you.
Chastelard. Turn your face to me:
 I do not grudge your face this death of
 mine;
 It is too fair — by God, you are too
 fair.
 What noise is that?
Queen. Can the hour be through so
 soon?
 I bade them give me but a little hour.
 Ah! I do love you! such brief space
 for love!
 I am yours all through, do all your will
 with me;
 What if we lay and let them take us
 fast,
 Lips grasping lips? I dare do any
 thing.
Chastelard. Show better cheer: let no
 man see you mazed;
- Make haste and kiss me cover up
 your throat,
 Lest one see tumbled lace, and prate
 of it.
*Enter the Guard: MURRAY, DARNLEY,
 MARY HAMILTON, MARY BEATON,
 and others with them.*
Darnley. Sirs, do your charge; let
 him not have much time.
Mary Hamilton. Peace, lest you chafe
 the queen: look, her brows bend.
Chastelard. Lords, and all you come
 hither for my sake,
 If while my life was with me like a
 friend
 That I must now forget the friendship
 of,
 I have done a wrong to any man of you,
 As it may be by fault of mine I have;
 Of such an one I crave for courtesy
 He will now cast it from his mind and
 heed
 Like a dead thing; considering my dead
 fault
 Worth no remembrance further than
 my death.
 This for his gentle honor and good-will
 I do beseech him, doubting not to find
 Such kindness if he be nobly made
 And of his birth a courteous race of
 man.
 You, my lord James, if you have aught
 toward me —
 Or you, Lord Darnley — I dare fear no
 jot,
 Whate'er this be wherein you were
 aggrieved,
 But you will pardon all for gentleness.
Darnley. For my part — yea, well, if
 the thing stand thus,
 As you must die — one would not bear
 folk hard —
 And if the rest shall hold it honorable,
 Why, I do pardon you.
Murray. Sir, in all things
 We find no cause to speak of you but
 well:
 For all I see, save this your deadly
 fault,
 I hold you for a noble perfect man.
Chastelard. I thank you, fair lord, for
 your nobleness.
 You likewise, for the courtesy you have

I give you thanks, sir; and to all these lords

That have not heart to load me at my death.

Last, I beseech of the best queen of men,

And royallest fair lady in the world,
To pardon me my grievous mortal sin
Done in such great offence of her: for,
sirs,

If ever since I came between her eyes
She hath beheld me other than I am,
Or shown her honor other than it is,
Or, save in royal faultless courtesies,
Used me with favor; if by speech or face,

By salutation or by tender eyes,
She hath made a way for my desire to live,

Given ear to me or boldness to my breath;

I pray God cast me forth before day cease,

Even to the heaviest place there is in hell.

Yea, if she be not stainless toward all men,

I pray this axe that I shall die upon
May cut me off body and soul from heaven.

Now for my soul's sake I dare pray to you:

Forgive me, madam.

Queen. Yea, I do, fair sir:

With all my heart, in all I pardon you.

Chastelard. God thank you for great mercies. — Lords, set hence;

I am right loath to hold your patience here;

I must not hold much longer any man's.
Bring me my way, and bid me fare well forth.

[*As they pass out, the QUEEN stays*
MARY BEATON.

Queen. Hark hither, sweet. Get back to Holyrood,

And take Carmichael with you: go both up

In some chief window whence the squares lie clear, —

Seem not to know what I shall do: mark that, —

And watch how things fare under.
Have good cheer;

You do not think now I can let him die?

Nay, this were shameful madness if you did,

And I should hate you.

Mary Beaton. Pray you love me, madam,

And swear you love me, and will let me live,

That I may die the quicker.

Queen. Nay, sweet, see,
Nay, you shall see, this must not seem devised;

I will take any man with me, and go;
Yea, for pure hate of them that hate him: yea,

Lay hold upon the headsman, and bid strike

Here on my neck; if they will have him die,

Why, I will die too: queens have died this way

For less things than his love is. Nay, I know

They want no blood; I will bring swords to boot

For dear love's rescue though half earth were slain;

What should men do with blood? Stand fast at watch;

For I will be his ransom if I die.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *The Upper Chamber in Holyrood.*

MARY BEATON seated: MARY CARMICHAEL at a window.

Mary Beaton. Do you see nothing?

Mary Carmichael. Nay, but swarms of men

And talking women gathered in small space,

Flapping their gowns and gaping with fools' eyes;

And a thin ring round one that seems to speak,

Holding his hands out eagerly: no more.

Mary Beaton. Why, I hear more: I hear men shout *The queen!*

Mary Carmichael. Nay, no cries yet.
Mary Beaton. Ah! they will cry out soon
 When she comes forth; they should cry out on her:
 I hear their crying in my heart. Nay, sweet,
 Do not you hate her? All men, if God please,
 Shall hate her one day; yea, one day, no doubt,
 I shall worse hate her.
Mary Carmichael. Pray you, be at peace;
 You hurt yourself: she will be merciful; What! could you see a true man slain for you?
 I think I could not; it is not like our hearts
 To have such hard sides to them.
Mary Beaton. Oh, not you, And I could nowise: there's some blood in her
 That does not run to mercy as ours doth;
 That fair face and the cursed heart in her
 Made keener than a knife for manslaying
 Can bear strange things.
Mary Carmichael. Peace, for the people come.
 Ah! Murray, hooded over half his face
 With plucked-down hat, few folk about him, eyes
 Like a man angered; Darnley after him,
 Holding our Hamilton above her wrist,
 His mouth put near her hair to whisper with —
 And she laughs softly, looking at his feet.
Mary Beaton. She will not live long; God hath given her
 Few days and evil, full of hate and love, I see well now.
Mary Carmichael. Hark, there's their cry — *The queen!*
Fair life and long, and good days to the queen!
Mary Beaton. Yea, but God knows. I feel such patience here
 As I were sure in a brief while to die.

Mary Carmichael. She bends and laughs a little, graciously,
 And turns half, talking to I know not whom —
 A big man with great shoulders; ah! the face,
 You get his face now, — wide and dusky, yea,
 The youth burnt out of it. A goodly man,
 Thewed mightily and sunburnt to the bone;
 Doubtless he was away in banishment, Or kept some march far off.
Mary Beaton. Still you see nothing?
Mary Carmichael. Yea, now they bring him forth with a great noise,
 The folk all shouting, and men thrust about
 Each way from him.
Mary Beaton. Ah! Lord God, bear with me,
 Help me to bear a little with my love
 For thine own love, or give me some quick death.
 Do not come down; I shall get strength again,
 Only my breath fails. Looks he sad or blithe?
 Not sad I doubt yet.
Mary Carmichael. Nay, not sad a whit,
 But like a man who losing gold or lands
 Should lose a heavy sorrow; his face set,
 The eyes not curious to the right or left,
 And reading in a book, his hands unbound,
 With short fleet smiles. The whole place catches breath,
 Looking at him; she seems at point to speak:
 Now she lies back, and laughs, with her brows drawn
 And her lips drawn too. Now they read his crime.
 I see the laughter tightening her chin:
 Why do you bend your body, and draw breath?
 They will not slay him in her sight; I am sure
 She will not have him slain.

Mary Beaton. Forth, and fear not :
I was just praying to myself — one word,
A prayer I have to say for her to God
If he will mind it.

Mary Carmichael. Now he looks her
side ;
Something he says, if one could hear
thus far :
She leans out, lengthening her throat
to hear,
And her eyes shining.

Mary Beaton. Ah ! I had no hope ;
Yea, thou God knowest that I had no
hope.
Let it end quickly.

Mary Carmichael. Now his eyes are
wide,
And his smile great ; and like another
smile
The blood fills all his face. Her cheek
and neck

Work fast and hard ; she must have
pardoned him,
He looks so merrily. Now he comes
forth

Out of that ring of people, and kneels
down ;

Ah ! how the helve and edge of the
great axe

Turn in the sunlight as the man shifts
hands !

It must be for a show : because she sits
And hardly moves her head this way ;
I see

Her chin and lifted lips. Now she
stands up,

Puts out her hand, and they fall mutter-
ing ;

Ah !

Mary Beaton. It is done now ?

Mary Carmichael. For God's love,
stay there !

Do not look out. Nay, he is dead by
this ;

But gather up yourself from off the floor.
Will she die too ? I shut mine eyes,
and heard —

Sweet, do not beat your face upon the
ground.

Nay, he is dead and slain.

Mary Beaton. What ! slain indeed ?
I knew he would be slain. Ay, through
the neck :

I knew one must be smitten through the
neck,

To die so quick : if one were stabbed
to the heart,
He would die slower.

Mary Carmichael. Will you behold
him dead ?

Mary Beaton. Yea : must a dead man
not be looked upon
That living one was fain of ? give me
way.

Lo you, what sort of hair this fellow
had ;

The doomsman gathers it into his hand
To grasp the head by for all men to see :
I never did that.

Mary Carmichael. For God's love, let
me go !

Mary Beaton. I think sometimes she
must have held it so,
Holding his head back, see you, by the
hair,

To kiss his face, still lying in his arms.
Ay, go and weep : it must be pitiful
If one could see it. What is this they
say ?

So perish the queen's traitors ! Yea,
but so

Perish the queen ! — God, do thus much
to her

For his sake only : yea, for pity's sake
Do thus much with her.

Mary Carmichael. Prithee, come in
with me :

Nay, come at once.

Mary Beaton. If I should meet with
her,

And spit upon her at her coming in —
But if I live then shall I see one day
When God will smite her lying harlot's
mouth, —

Surely I shall. Come, I will go with
you ;

We will sit down together face to face
Now, and keep silence ; for this life is
hard,

And the end of it is quietness at last.
Come, let us go : here is no word to
say.

An usher. Make way there for the
lord of Bothwell ; room, —

Place for my lord of Bothwell next the
queen.

BOTHWELL: A TRAGEDY.

πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ τρέφει
δεινα δαιμάτων ἄχη,
πόνται τ' ἀγκάλαι κνωδάλων
ἀνταίων βροτοῖσι
πλάθουσι, βλαστοῦσι καὶ πεδαίχμιοι
λαμπάδες πεδᾶροσι,
πταρά τε καὶ πεδοβάμορα, κἀνεμοέντων
αἰγίδων φρέσαι κότον.

ἀλλ' ὑπέροτμον ἀν-
δρὸς φρόνημα τίς λέγοι,
καὶ γυναικῶν φροσὴν τλημόνων ;
καὶ παντόλμους
ἔρωτας ἄταισι συννόμους βροτῶν,
ξυζύγους ὅ' ἄμαυλίας ;
θηλυερατῆς ἀπέρωτος ἔρωσ παρανοκῆ
κνωδάλων τε καὶ βροτῶν.

ÆRSCH. Cho. 585-601.

À VICTOR HUGO.

COMME un fleuve qui donne à l'océan son âme,
J'apporte au lieu sacré d'où le vers tonne et luit
Mon drame épique et plein de tumulte et de
flamme,
Où vibre un siècle éteint, où flotte un jour qui
fuit.

Un peuple qui rugit sous les pieds d'une femme
Passe, et son souffle emplit d'aube et d'ombre et
de bruit

Un ciel âpre et guerrier qui luit comme une lame
Sur l'avenir debout, sur le passé détruit.

Au fond des cieus hagards, par l'orage battue,
Une figure d'ombre et d'étoiles vêtue
Pleure et menace et brille en s'évanouissant;

Éclair d'amour qui blesse et de haine qui tue,
Fleur éclosée au sommet du siècle éblouissant,
Rose à tige épineuse et que rougit le sang.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARY STUART.
MARY BEATON.
MARY SEYTON.
MARY CARMICHAEL.
JANE GORDON, *Countess of Bothwell*.
JANET STUART, *Countess of Argyll*.
MARGARET LADY DOUGLAS of *Lochleven*.
LADY RERES.
HENRY LORD DARNLEY, *King Consort*.
JAMES HEPBURN, *Earl of Bothwell*.
JAMES STUART, *Earl of Murray*.
JAMES DOUGLAS, *Earl of Morton*.
WILLIAM MATTLAND of *Lethington, Secretary of State*.
JOHN KNOX.
DAVID RIZZIO.
The Earls of HUNTLEY, ARGYLE, CAITHNESS, ROTHES, CASSILIS, ATHOL, and MAR.
Lords HERRIES, LINDSAY, RUTHVEN, FLEMING, SEYTON, BOYD, OCHILTREE, HUME, ARBROATH, and MAXWELL.

The younger RUTHVEN.
THE MASTER OF OCHILTREE, *son to Lord Ochiltree*.
THE MASTER OF MAXWELL, *son to Lord Herries*.
SIR JAMES MELVILLE.
SIR ROBERT MELVILLE.
SIR GEORGE DOUGLAS, *uncle to Darnley*.
SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS of *Lochleven*.
GEORGE DOUGLAS, *his brother*.
SIR WILLIAM KIRKALDY of *Grange*.
LORD ROBERT STUART, *Abbot of St. Cross*.
DU CROC, *Ambassador from France*.
SIR NICHOLAS THROGMORTON, *Ambassador from England*.
JOHN HAMILTON, *Archbishop of St. Andrews*.
JOHN LESLIE, *Bishop of Ross*.
ARTHUR ERSKINE, *Captain of the Guard*.
ANTHONY STANDEN and STUART of TRAQUAIR, *Equerries*.

JOHN ERSKINE of Dun.
 ANDREW KER of Fauldonside.
 HENRY DRUMMOND of Ricarton.
 ARCHIBALD BRATON.
 JOHN HEBURN of Bolton, ORMISTON, HAY of
 Talla, Conspirators with Bothwell.
 CRAWFORD, NELSON, TAYLOR, servants to
 Darnley.

NICHOLAS HUBERT, surnamed PARIS, ser-
 vant to Bothwell.
 THE PROVOST OF EDINBURGH.
 ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, steward to the Earl
 of Lennox.
 Page and Girl attending on Lady Lochleven.
 Burgesses, Citizens, Soldiers, Attendants,
 etc.

TIME, MARCH 9, 1566, TO MAY 16, 1568.

ACT I.—DAVID RIZZIO.

SCENE I.—HOLYROOD.

Enter DARNLEY and MARY CARMICHAEL.

Darnley. But you will not believe me
 though you hear;
 You have no faith: you steer by sight,
 and see

This fellow gilt and garnished with her
 grace

Sit covered by the queen where lords
 stand bare,

And jet before them lordlier; and the
 sight

Makes firm your faith that in his hand
 and eye

This land is but a harp to play upon,
 Whose strings may turn to serpents or
 to swords,

To maim his hand or charm his eye to
 death.

You have no faith to see this, or to
 read

The sentence that ensuing shall write
 me king,

And worth men's fears or faiths: lo!
 now you laugh,

As though my hope were braggart, and
 myself

A fool and mouthpiece of its foolish
 vaunt:

You have no faith.

Mary Carmichael. I have no wit nor
 will

To choose between St. David for my
 lord

And sweet St. Henry.

Darnley. Nay, King David now,
 King David psalmist; but for all his
 song

I doubt he hath lost the old trick of
 touch he had

Once in the sword-play.

Mary Carmichael. See you play not
 Saul,

Who are something of his stature in
 our eyes,

Much of his mighty presence; be it not
 said

He hath snipt your skirts already.

Darnley. Who said that?

Who speaks of me so, lies to the blood
 and bone,

To the heart and soul lies. I am no
 king mayhap,—

I do not say yet I shall die no
 king:

God knows that, and is wise,—but man
 I am,

Look else, who love you—

Mary Carmichael. Sir, be king for
 me,

It shall content my will to you-ward,
 seeing

I take you to be royal, and myself
 Honest.

Darnley. Why honest? what a gibe
 is this?

What make you of me?

Mary Carmichael. Yea, what should
 I make?

'Tis time I were on service.

Darnley. Oh, the queen's?

She gets good service, excellent service
 done,

And worthy servants hath she,—a lib-
 eral queen.

Well, if you will.

[*Exit MARY CARMICHAEL.*

I would the month were out.
 If earth were easier by just one less
 knave,

I might sleep well and laugh and walk
at ease,
With none to mate me.

Enter MORTON.

Ah! my good lord and friend,
I had somewhat I would say—but let
words be.

The man you know of, I would you
had made him safe;
I would have told you this much.

Morton. Sir, the earl
Murray being with us in the main thing
here,

Though he keep hand from the red
handiwork,
Shall enough help us.

Darnley. Let him know it not, then:
Let him stand by: he must not know
it. Why, well,

It is the more our honor: yet would
God
He, being not with us, were not any-
where,

But dead, sir, dead! I say, who hath
eyes to see

May see him dangerous to us, and mani-
fest.

Ye have no eyes who see not: for my
part,

I noted him at once. Sir, by this
light,

When I first saw him—and I have eyes
to see—

I knew what manner of meaning in his
face

Lay privy and folded up and sealed and
signed.

I would you lords had sight and heart
like mine:

He should not long live dangerous;
yet, God wot,

For my poor personal peril I would
match

This body against his better.

Morton. There's no need
Of iron words and matches here. of
men,

Save this we meet upon; which being
played out

Leaves our hands full and henceforth
peaceable.

For the earl, he makes no part of men's
designs,

Nor would I have you keen to strive
with him

Who lies yet still, and is well liked of
men

That are well-willers to this common
state

And the open peace of the people.
Let him be;

Keep your heart here.

Darnley. Here is it fixed and set
With roots of iron. 'Tis more honor
to us,

Being so more perilous, to have no help
Of popular hands and common friendli-
ness,

But our hearts helpful only. I am sure
of her,

That she suspects not,—I do surely
think:

But yet she is subtle and secret-souled
and wise,

Wise woman-fashion; look you, be not
caught

Through too much trust in what of her
is weak,—

In her light mind and mutability;
For subtlety lies close in her light wit,

And wisdom wantons in her wanton-
ness:

I know her, I know her; I have seen
her ere now, and am

Not all to learn in women.

Morton. I believe
Your grace hath grace with women as
with men,

And skill of sense alike in those and
these,

I doubt not; which is well and profit-
able.

For this, how shall she know it, except
you slip

And let her wring the truth out from
your hand,

Or kiss the truth out, hanging mouth
on mouth?

But if no pressure press from hand or
lip

The unripe truth, the fruit so soon so
red,

What can she to us, though doubting,
help or harm,—

How, if she know not surely?

Darnley. So I say.

And we that do it, we do it for all men's good,
 For the main people's love, thankworthily —
 And this is matter of law we take in hand,
 Is it not, lawful? for the man is judged,
 Doomed dead and damned by sentence,
 in good deed,
 Though not by scruple and show of trial and test,
 By clearer cause and purer policy —
 We cannot stand toward any accountable,
 As for a slaughter, a treasonable shame,
 To mark us red in the world's eyes? no man
 Can say our fame is blotted with his blood,
 No man, albeit he hate us, bring in doubt, —
 Woman or man, — our right, our absolute law,
 Giving us leave — nay, bidding us do so?
 So that we stand after the deed as now,
 In no more danger or fear?
Morton. In less fear, you,
 And much more honor; now it might please you fear,
 Being overborne of woman and fast bound
 With feminine shame and weakness;
 the man's strength,
 The sinew and nerve and spirit of royalty,
 Hers, and all power to use her power on you
 Hers, and all honor and pleasure of high place
 That should make sweet your lips and bright your brows
 Hers, and the mockery of mismarried men
 Yours.
Darnley. Nay, by God I said so; why, I knew it:
 I told you thus aforetime, did I not?
Morton. Truly and wisely; if this content you thus,
 He is even our king.
Darnley. Methinks he should be king,

And I, God wot, content. Here came a man
 Some few days back, a goodly, a gentleman,
 An honorable, that for king knave's behoof
 Was stript out of the better of all his lands
 As I of what was best part of my wife,
 My place, and honor that grows up with hers —
 For of her love small fruit was left to strip,
 Few leaves for winter weather — but of these,
 These good things, am I stript as bare as shame,
 Even beggared as was this man. By God's light,
 It seems this is but justice, doth it not,
 And I so gentle and temperate — as, by God,
 I was not nor I will not.
Morton. There's more need
 That you seem resolutely temperate then,
 And temperately be resolute, I say,
 Till the hour to cast off temperance and put on
 Plain passion for the habit of your heart,
 Which now it wears in darkness, and by day
 The cloak and hood of temperance.
 But these fits
 And gusts and starts of will and will not, these
 Blow you this side and that side till men see
 Too much, and trust too little.
Darnley. O sir, you are wise,
 You are honorable, and a counsellor, and my friend,
 And I too light, too light — yet by this light
 I think I am worth more than your counsel is
 If I be worth this work here to be done —
 I think I am so much.
Morton. It may well be, sir,
 And you much wiser; yet forbear your wrath
 If you would have it ready to your hand.

Darnley. I will forbear nothing —
 nor nothing bear —
 Nor live by no man's bidding. This
 year through
 I have even been surfeited with wise
 men's breath
 And winds of wordy weather round
 mine ears, —
 Do this, spare that, walk thus, look
 otherwise,
 Hold your head kingly, or wisely bow
 your neck :
 A man might come to doubt himself no
 man,
 Being so long childlike handled. Now,
 look you,
 Look she, look God to it if I be not
 man !
 Now is my way swept, and my foot shod
 now,
 My wallet full now for the travelling day
 That I fare forth and forward, arrow
 straight,
 Girt for the goal, red battle-ripe at
 need —
 As need there is — you are sure — and
 utter need ?
Morton. Is my lord not sure ?
Darnley. Ay, as sure as you, —
 Surer, maybe: the need is more of
 mine, —
 This grazes your bare hand that grates
 my heart :
 Your queen it is wrongs you, and me
 my wife.
Morton. You see that sure, too ?
 sharp sight, have you not ?
Darnley. I saw it, I first — I knew
 her — who knew her but I,
 That swore, — at least, I swore to mine
 own soul,
 Would not for shame's sake swear out
 wide to the world,
 But in myself swore with my heart to
 hear, —
 There was more in it, in all their com-
 merce, more
 Than the mere music: he is warped,
 worn through,
 Bow-bent, uncomely in wholesome eyes
 that see
 Straight, seeing him crooked; but she
 seeing a wry

Sees the man straight enough for para-
 mour.
 This I saw, this I swore too — silently,
 Not loud but sure, till time should be
 to speak
 Sword's language, no fool's jargon like
 his tongue,
 But plain broad steel speech and intel-
 ligible,
 Though not to the ear, Italian's be it or
 Scot's,
 But to the very life intelligible.
 To the loosed soul, to the shed blood —
 for blood
 There must be — one must slay him —
 you are sure — as I am ?
 For I was sure of it always: while
 you said,
 All you, 'twas council-stuff, state-handi-
 craft,
 Cunning of card-play between here and
 there,
 I knew 'twas this and more, sir; I kept
 sight,
 Kept heed of her, what thing she was,
 what wife,
 What manner of stateswoman and gov-
 ernness —
 More than all you saw — did you see it
 or I ?
Morton. You saw first surely, and
 some one spoke first out —
 You had eyes, he tongue — and both
 bear witness now
 If this must be or not be.
Darnley. Death, is that ?
 I must kill — bid you kill him ?
Morton. Nowise, sir;
 As little need of one as the other is
 here;
 As little of either as no need at all.
Darnley. You doubt or hand or
 tongue, then, sir, of mine ?
 I would not strike, if need were, or
 bid strike ?
Morton. Neither we doubt, nor nei-
 ther do we need —
 Having you with us.
Darnley. 'Twas but so you meant ?
 I had else been angry — nay, half
 wroth I was —
 Not as I took it — I had else been
 wroth indeed.

Morton. That had been grievous to me and perilous,
This time of all times.

Darnley. Ay, you need me, ay;
I am somewhat now then, somewhat more than wont,
Who thus long have been nothing — but will be?

Well, so, I am with you. Shall he die — how soon?

To-day I had said, but haply not to-day —

There might fall somewhat, something slip awry,

In such swift work, ha? Then, what day? Perchance

'Twere better he died abed — or were there charms,

Spells — if himself though be not witch, drug-proof

'Tis like, and devil-witted, being a knave Born poisonous and bred sorcerous like his kind —

We have heard what manner of plague his south land spawns,

What sort of kith and kin to hell and him,

How subtle in starry riddles and earth's roots

The dog-leeches that kill your soul in you,

Or only body, or both, as Catherine please,

Mother that was to our Mary — have we not?

We must look to it, and closely look.

Morton. My lord,
Of so much being so sure, of this be too;
That surely and soon in some wise very sure

We are quit of him with God's help or without.

Darnley. Why, that were well. I hold you resolute;

I pray you stay so, and all is well enough. We have talked our time out — you had all to say —

All the thing's carriage — and my mind to take,

Which with plain heart I have made you understand.

My mind is, he must die then: keep you there. [Exit.

Morton. Had God but plagued Egypt with fools for flies,
His Jews had sped the quicker.

Enter MARY BEATON.

Is the queen risen,

Lady?

Mary Beaton. Not yet. Was not the king with you?

I heard him high and shrill.

Morton. Ay, he was here,
If anywhere the king be. You are sad.

Mary Beaton. I am not blithe of bearing, I wot well,

But the word sad is sadder than I am.

Is he not vexed?

Morton. I have never seen him else,
Save when light-heartedness and loose-

hung brain
Have made him proud and drunken:
as of late

He has been but seldom. There's one sad at least;

If it be sad to hang the head apart,
Walk with brows drawn and eyes dis-

quieted,
Speak sullen under breath, and shrug and swear,

If any move him, and then again fall dumb;

He has changed his fresher manner, and put off

What little grace made his ungracious youth

Fair in men's eyes a little; if this last,

He will not long last in men's lordship here,

Except by love and favor shown of the queen.

Mary Beaton. There he sits strong in surety; yet men say

He is discontent, disheartened, for distaste

Of the like love and favor shown of her

(Or not the like, yet too much near the like)

Toward Rizzio; but such men, seeing visionary,

Run wide in talk, and sleep with speech awake

And sight shut fast: are you not of my mind?

Morton. I am most of theirs whose
mind is most toward hers,
As whose should be most noble; but in
truth
Mine own is moved to hear her gra-
cious heart
Mismade of, her clear courtesies mis-
read,
Misliked her liking, her good will ma-
ligned.
Even of his mouth who owes life, breath,
and place,
Honor and title, even to that clear good
will
To that her grace, liking, and courtesy.
Mary Beaton. You mean our lord
and hers and king of Scots?
Morton. As kingly a king as master-
ful a lord,
And no less hers than ours; as strong
each way.
Mary Beaton. And he misreads so
much the queen's pure heart
As to mistake aloud her manner of
life,
And teach the world's broad open
popular ear
His graceless commentary on her mere
grace
And simple favor shown a simple
knave,
Her chamber-child, her varlet? a poor
man,
Stranger, skilled little in great men's
policies
— Which is strange too, seeing he
hath had some chance
To learn some tricks of courts and
embassies,
Being therein bred, and not so very a
fool
But one might teach him—yet no
doubt a man,
Save for such teaching, simple and in-
nocent;
Only what heart, what spirit and wit he
has,
Being hot and close as fire on the old
faith's side
And the French party's—if his wit
were great,
It might do more than simple service
soon,

Having her heart as 'twere by the ear
which leans
Still toward his saying or singing; but
ye know
There is no peril in him, and the king
More fool than he a knave.
Morton. Well, I know not;
My skill is small in tunes, yet I can tell
Discord between kings' ear and peo-
ple's tongue,
Which hearing as in spirit I forehear
Harsh future music in a state mistuned,
If such men lay but hand upon the
keys,
Touch ne'er so slight a string of policy
With ne'er so light a finger: I would
the queen,
For the dear faith I bear her, saw but
this,
Or that the lords were heavier-eyed to
see.
Mary Beaton. Are they so keen of
soul as of their sight, —
To slay wrong as to see wrong?
Morton. 'Faith, with us
The hand is matched against the eye for
speed;
And these no slower in stroke of sight
and sword
Than their sharp-sighted swift-souled
forefathers.
I say not this that you should gather
fear
Out of my saying to sow in the ear of
the queen;
But for truth's sake; and truly I do not
fear
That I have put fear in you, for you
seem
Not lightly fearful to me.
Mary Beaton. I would not be,
Where I might keep good heart and
open eye,
Nor blind nor fevered with foolhardi-
ness,
As here meseems I may keep; for I see
No hurt yet nor hurt's danger steer in
sight,
Save the mere daily danger of high-
raised heads
To be mis-spoken and mis-seen of men,
Which is not for high-seated hearts to
fear.

Morton. Her heart is high enough,
and yours as hers :
You shall do well to hold your courage
fast,
Keeping your wits awake ; whereof
myself
I make no doubt, howbeit men fear the
queen,
Having our bitter folk and faith to fight,
Out of sharp spirit and high-heartedness
May do such things for love's sake or
for wrath's
As fools for fear's sake : which were no
less harm
(Turning her wit and heart against her-
self)
Than to be coward or witless. Fare
you well :
I will not doubt but she is well advised.

[*Exit.*
Mary Beaton. He is but dead by this,
then. I did know it ;
And yet it strikes upon me sudden and
sharp,
As a thing unforethought on. It is
strange
To have one's foot as mine is on the
verge,
The narrowing threshold of a thing so
great,
To have within one's eyeshot the whole
way,
The perfect reach of fate from end to
end,
From life to life replying and death to
death.
This is the first hour of the night, and I
The watcher of the first watch, by whose
lamp
The starless sky that grows toward birth
of stars
And the unlit earth and obscure air are
seen
Pale as the lamp's self yet not well
alight.
Yet by the light of my heart's fire, and
mind
Kindled, I see what fires of storm, what
flaws,
What windy meteors and cross-counter-
ing stars,
Shall be through all the watches to the
dawn

And bloodlike sunrise of the fire-eyed
day.

I am half content already ; and yet I
would

This watch were through.

*Enter the QUEEN, RIZZIO, and MARY
SEYTON.*

Queen. Nay, it is later, sure :
I am idle, I am idle, and flattered : you
say wrong,

To find my sloth some pardonable plea,
Which is not pardonable ; a perfect sin,
One writ among the sorest seven of
all ;

Enough to load the soul past penitence.
Am I not late indeed ? speak truth and
say.

Rizzio. To watchers the sun rises ever
late,

Though he keep time with summer ;
but your grace
Keeps earlier than the sun's time.

Queen. 'Tis but March,
And a scant spring, a sharp and starve-
ling year.

How bitter black the day grows ! one
would swear

The weather and earth were of this
people's faith,

And their heaven colored as their
thoughts of heaven,

Their light made of their love.

Rizzio. If it might please you

Look out, and lift up heart to summer-
ward,

There might be sun enough for seeing
and sense,

To light men's eyes at, and warm hands
withal.

Queen. I doubt the winter's white is
deeper dyed

And closer worn than I thought like to
be ;

This land of mine hath folded itself
round

With snow-cold, white, and leprous mis-
belief,

Till even the spirit is bitten, the blood
pinched,

And the heart winter-wounded ; these
starved slaves

That feed on frost, and suck the snows
for drink,

Hating the light for the heat's sake, love
the cold:

We want some hotter fire than summer
or sun

To burn their dead blood through, and
change their veins.

Rizzio. Madam, those fires are all but
ashen dust.

'Tis by the sun we have now to walk
warm.

If I had leave to give good counsel
tongue

And wisdom words to work with, I
would say,

Rather by favor and seasonable grace
Shall your sweet light of summer-speak-
ing looks

Melt the hard mould of earthen hearts,
and put

Spring into spirits of snow. Your hus-
band here,

Who was my friend before your lord,
being grown

Doubtful, and evil-eyed against him-
self,

With a thwart wit crossing all counsel,
turns

From us-ward to their close fierce inti-
macy

Who are bitterest of the faction against
faith,

And through their violent friendship has
become

His own and very enemy, being moved
Of mere loose heart to vex you. Now
there stands

On the other hand, in no wise bound to
him,

But as your rebel and his enemy
Cast forth condemned, one that called
home again

Might be a bond between the time and
you,

Tying the wild world tamer to your
hand,

And in your husband's hot and unreined
mouth

As bit and bridle against his wandering
will.

Queen. What name is his who shall
so strengthen me?

Rizzio. Your father gave him half a
brother's name.

Queen. I have no brother: a blood-
less traitor he is

Who was my father's bastard born. By
heaven,

I had rather have his head loose at my
foot

Than his tongue's counsel rounded in
mine ear.

Rizzio. I would you had called him
out of banishment.

Queen. Thou art mad, thou art mad;
prate me no more of him.

Rizzio. He is wise, and we need wis-
dom; penitent,

And God, they say, loves most his peni-
tents;

Stout-hearted and well-minded toward
your grace,

As you shall work him, and beguileable
Now at your need if you but will he be;

And God he knows if there be need of
such.

Queen. No need, no need: I am
crowned of mine own heart,

And of mine own will weaponed; am I
queen

To have need of traitors' leave to live
by, and reign

By the God's grace of these? I will not
have it;

Toward God I swear there shall be no
such need.

Rizzio. Yet if there were no need,
less harm it were

To have him easily on your royal side
While the time serves that he may serve
you in,—

Less harm than none, and profit more
than less.

Queen. He is a misborn traitor and
heretic;

And of his own side baffled, a flat fool,
Who thought to have comfort of Eliza-
beth,

Large furtherance of my sweet-souled
sister's love,

Grace and sure aid of her good plighted
word,

Her honorable and precious plighted
word,

And secret seal to help him; as she
durst not,

Yea, she would fain and durst not.

Rizzio. Please you note —

Queen. It shall not please me; I say
she hath made him kneel,
(And this does please me indeed) hath
seen him down,
Seen him and spurned him kneeling
from her foot,
As my born traitor and subject. David,
nay,
But hath thy careful love not made thee
mad,
Whose counsel was my sword against
him once?
Why, thou wast sworn his slayer; and
all that while
He held up head against us, thy one
word
Bade strike him dead of all men.
What! hast thou
Fairly forgot his purpose, were I taken,
To speed thee out of life? his secret
bond,
Sealed with himself in spirit, thou
shouldst die?
Wast thou not trothplight with that
soulless boy,
Ere he might thee, to rid him out of
life?
Nay, and thou knowest how dear a
cause I have,
And thou, to slay him when the good
chance comes,
Which God make speedy toward us!
by my hand,
Too little and light to hold up his dead
head,
It was my hope to dip it in his life
Made me ride iron-mailed, a soldieress,
All those days through we drove them
here and there,
Eastward from Fife, and hither and
forth again,
And broken to the border; yea, all day
I thought how worth his life it were to
ride
Within the shot-length of my saddlebow
And try my poor and maiden soldier-
ship.
And now I am bidden, and you it is
bid me,
Reach my hand forth forgivingly and
meek
To strike with his for love and policy?

He is beaten and broken, without help
of hope,
Who was mine enemy ever, and ever I
knew
How much he was mine enemy; and
now maimed,
Wounded, unseated from his power of
place,
Shall I raise up again and strengthen
him,
Warm and bind up his cold and o'er-
bled wounds
With piteous cordials? nay, but when I
do,
May he have strength to wreak his will
on me,
And I be flung under his feet! be-
side,
He was your mocking-stock this short
while since:
You swore, men tell me, Daniot told it
me, —
Your ghostly man of counsel, — why, to
him,
He says, you swore the bastard should
not bide
With you in Scotland; it made anger
at you,
Put passion in their mouths who bear
you hard,
That you should threaten kinglike.
Hath he moved you
To change your heart and face toward
him at once,
Or do you mock, or are struck mad
indeed,
That now you turn to bid me cry him
home,
Make much of him and sing him to my
side?
Rizzio. For all this, madam, if I be
not mad,
It were well done to do it. He is a
man
Well-loved, well-counselled, and though
fast in faith,
Yet howsoever in strong opinion bound,
Not so much over-ridden of his own
mind
As to love no man for faith's single
sake;
No fire-brained preacher nor wild-witted
knave,

But skilled and served in state and
 sovereignty.
 What such a need was to unthink of
 me?
 Say it is but this jewel he sends me
 here
 That pleads his part before you: say I
 am his
 And not your servant, or not truly of
 you
 Made and again unmakeable: by truth
 He hath given me grounds to be his coun-
 sel to you.
 And I have taken, and here I plead his
 part.
 Seeing my life hangs upon your life
 and yours.
 If it be fall and even and fortunate
 In spite of foes and fears and treads,
 must hang
 On his shoulder from these and bound
 to you.
 We have done ill, having so mighty
 a march,
 So large a wager on this turn of time,
 To leave the stakes in hand of a lewd
 boy,
 A fool and thankless; and to save the
 game
 We must play privily, and hold secret
 hands.
Quera. I will not have his hand upon
 my part,
 Though it were safe to sweep up gold
 and all.
Rissio. But till our side be strong;
 then cast him off,
 When he hath served to strengthen you
 so much
 You have no need of any strength of
 his.
 Bear with him but till time be, and we
 touch
 The heart of the hour that brings our
 chance to catch
 Hope by the flying hair, and to our
 wheel
 Bind fortune and wind-wavering maj-
 esty,
 To shift no more in the air of any
 change,
 But hang a steady star; then, when the
 faith

Sets crowned in us that serve her, and
 you hold
 The triple-treasured kingdom in your
 lap.
 What shall forbid you set a sudden
 foot
 Where it may please you, on their
 hearts or heads
 That in their season were found service-
 able,
 And now are stones of stumbling?
 Time shapes all:
 And service he may do you, or else
 offence,
 Even as you handle this sharp point of
 time,
 To turn its edge this wary way or that;
 And for the land and state, why, having
 served,
 He may be seasonably stript out of
 these
 When you would do some friend a
 courtesy
 Who has still been found secret and
 Catholic,
 A lantern's eye of counsel in close
 dark,
 While he did blind man's service; but
 till then
 Let him keep land and name, and all
 he will,
 And blindly serve to the blind end in
 trust,
 To wake a naked fool. That this may
 be,
 I am firm in faith, may it be but with
 your will.
Quera. He will not help us beat his
 own faith down;
 He is no hawk to seel and then to un-
 hood,
 Fly at strange fowl, and pluck back
 blind again.
Rissio. Bethink you, madam, he only
 of all his kind
 Stood out against men hotter in heresy,
 Spake down their speeches, overbore
 Pope Knox,
 Broke with his cardinal's college of
 shrewd saints,
 In your free faith's defence, that would
 have barred you
 From custom of religion; and I wot,

Save for his help, small help had found
my queen

From Huntley or Hamilton, her faith-
fellows,

Or any their co-worshippers with her.

Queen. Thou art ever saying them
wrong; they are stout and sure,

Even they that strove for honor's sake
with us:

Their one least fault I am minded to
forgive;

True friends in faith, my dear own
blood and kin,

No birthless bastards nor mistitled men.
It pleased me bid him into banish-
ment,

And shall not lightly please me bid him
back.

Rizzio. Yet some men banished for
no less a cause,

It has been known, you have loosed
from banishment.

I tell you for true heart.

Queen. Nay, I well know it.

You are good and faithful to us, God
quit it you,

And well of us loved back; how much,
you know,

But more than is our fear of men's mis-
saying.

For me, I find no such foul faultiness
In the lord Bothwell but might well be
purged

After long trial of English prison-bands
And proof of loyal lips and close true
heart

Whereout no gaoler could pluck dan-
gerous speech,

And then with overpassing to and fro
The strait sea wide enough to wash
him white

'Twixt France and us: and all this jar-
ring year

You have seen with what a service, in
full field,

Oft in our need he hath served us; nor
was it

Such matter of treason and nowise par-
donable

To mix his wits with Arran's broken
brain

In their device to entrap mine hand
with his

For high state's sake and strong-winged
policy,

When he was matched with me in most
men's mouths,

And found not yet for changeling or
for fool.

But howsoever, it pleased me pardon
him;

And a stout spear for warden have I
won.

I have help myself in help of him, who
now

Hath with good works undone his dead
misdeeds,

And left their memory drowned in the
under sea

That swept them out and washed him
in again,

A man remade; and fail me whoso fails,
Him I hold fast my friend; but those
cast out

That rose up right between my will and
me

To make me thrall and bondslave to
their own,

Giving me prison and them swift banish-
ment

Whom I gave honor, and cast the crown
away,

And break the old natural heart of
royalty,

For foul faith's sake or craft of their
miscreed;

That smote with sword or speech
against all state,

Not through blind heat or stumbling
hardihood,

But hate of holiness and height of mind,
Hateful to kingly truth, haters of kings;

Them though I pardon I would not
take to trust,

Nor bind up their loose faith with my
belief,

For all assurances of all men born.
Besides, I hate him, singly.

Rizzio. I have said, and say:
Do you as time will turn it; time turns
all.

Queen. I do believe there is no man's
estate

So miserable, so very a helpless thing,
So trodden under and overborne, as
mine.

For first the man that I set up for lord,
 For master of mine and mate of only
 me,
 Have I perforce put forth of my shamed
 bed,
 And broken on his brows the kingless
 crown,
 Finding nor head for gold nor hand for
 steel
 Worth name of king or husband, but
 the throne
 Lordless, the heart of marriage hus-
 bandless,
 Through his foul follies; then in the
 utter world,
 In the extreme range and race of my
 whole life
 Through all changed times and places
 of its change,
 Having one friend, I find a foe of him
 To my true sense and soul and spirit of
 thought
 That keeps in peace the things of its
 own peace,
 Secret and surely: in faith, this frets
 my faith,
 Distunes me into discord with myself,
 That you should counsel me against my
 soul.
 I pray you, do not.
Rizzio. Nay, I will no more.
 But if you take not Murray again to
 trust
 At least in short sweet seeming for
 some while,
 So to subdue him as with his own right
 hand
 And all chief with him of his creed and
 crew,
 Then, cleaving to the old counsel, sud-
 denly
 Have him attainted, and being so
 brought in
 By summons as your traitor, with good
 speed
 Have off his head; let him not live to
 turn;
 Choose you sure tongues to doom him,
 hands to rid,
 And be his slaying his sentence; for
 the rest,
 Make to you friends Argyle and Cha-
 telherault

And such more temperate of their fac-
 tion found
 As may be servants to your pardoning
 hand
 If they be separable; but anywise
 In pardoning these, forgive not half his
 fault
 With half their pardon; cut no branch
 of his,
 But the root only; strike not but at
 heart
 When you strike him: he hath done
 and borne too much
 To live 'twixt that and this unrecon-
 ciled,
 Having on this hand his conspiracy,
 On that your proclamation; his head
 priced,
 His life coursed after with hot hound
 and horn,
 His wife thrust forth hard on her trav-
 ailing time,
 With body soft from pangs and deli-
 cate,
 To roam in winter-bound and roofless
 woods:
 These things not wholly with your
 grace wiped off,
 And washed with favor and fair-faced
 love away,
 Must work within him deadly and des-
 perate.
Queen. Now
 I find your counsel in you, no strange
 tongue,
 But the old stout speech and sure; and
 this same day
 Will I set hand to it. I have chosen
 the lords
 That shall attain in council these men
 fled,
 Of mortal treason; and some two hours
 hence
 My tongue through their strange lips
 shall speak him dead
 Who is only my heart's hated among
 men.
 I am gay of heart, light as a spring
 south-wind,
 To feed my soul with his foretasted
 death.
 You know the reason I have, you know
 the right

And he the danger of it, being no fool,
For fool he is not; I would he were
but fool.

Oh, I feel dancing motions in my feet,
And laughter moving merrily at my
lips,

Only to think him dead and hearsed, or
hanged—

That were the better. I could dance
down his life,

Sing my steps through, treading on his
dead neck,

For love of his dead body and cast-out
soul.

He shall talk of me to the worm of
hell,

Prate in death's ear, and with a speech-
less tongue,

Of my dead doings in days gone out.
Sweet lord,

David, my good friend and my chancel-
lor,

I thank you for your counsel.

Rissio. May it be
Prosperously mine! but howsoever, I
think

It were not well, when this man is put
down,

Though Lethington be wily or Melville
wise,

To make your stay of any other man.

Queen. I would I had no state to
need no stay;

God witness me, I had rather be reborn,
And born a poor mean woman, and live
low

With harmless habit and poor purity
Down to my dull death-day, a shep-
herd's wife,

Than a queen clothed and crowned
with force and fear.

Rissio. Are you so weary of crowns,
and would not be

Soon wearier waxen of sheepfolds?

Queen. 'Faith, who knows?
But I would not be weary, let that be
Part of my wish. I could be glad and
good,

Living so low, with little labors set,
And little sleeps and watches, night
and day

Falling and flowing as small waves in
low sea

From shine to shadow and back, and
out and in

Among the firths and reaches of low
life:

I would I were away and well. No
more,

For dear love talk no more of policy.

Let France and faith and envy and
England be,

And kingdom go, and people: I had
rather rest

Quiet for all my simple space of life,
With few friends' loves closing my life-
days in,

And few things known, and grace of
humble ways,—

A loving little life of sweet small works.
Good faith, I was not made for other
life;

Nay, do you think it? I will not hear
thereof;

Let me hear music rather, as simple a
song,

If you have any, as these low thoughts
of mine,

Some lowly and old-world song of quiet
men.

Rissio. Then is the time for love-
songs when the lip

Has no more leave to counsel; even so
be it;

I will sing simply, and no more counsel
you.

Queen. Be not unfriends; I have
made you wroth indeed,

Unknowing, and pray you even for my
no fault

Forgive, and give me music; I am
athirst

For sweet-tongued pardon only.

Rissio. If this be harsh,
The pardon be for fault enforced of
mine.

*Love with shut wings, a little ungrown
love,*

A blind lost love, alit on my shut heart,

As on an unblown rose an unfledged dove;

Feeble the flight as yet, feeble the flower.

*And I said, Show me if sleep or love thou
art,*

*Or death or sorrow, or some obscure
power;*

Show me thyself, if thou be some such power,

*If thou be god or spirit, sorrow or love,
That I may praise thee for the thing thou art.*

And saying, I felt my soul a sudden flower

*Full-fledged of petals, and thereon a dove
Sitting full-feathered, singing at my heart.*

Yet the song's burden heavier on my heart

Than a man's burden laid on a child's power.

Surely most bitter of all sweet things thou art,

And sweetest thou of all things bitter, love;

*And if a poppy or if a rose thy flower,
We know not, nor if thou be kite or dove.*

*But nightingale is none, nor any dove,
That sings so long nor is so hot of heart*

*For love of sorrow or sorrow of any love;
Nor all thy pain hath any or all thy*

*power,
Nor any knows thee if bird or god thou art,*

*Or whether a thorn to think thee, or
whether a flower.*

But surely will I hold thee a glorious flower,

And thy tongue surely sweeter than the dove

Muttering in mid leaves from a fervent heart

*Something divine of some exceeding love,
If thou being god out of a great god's*

*power
Wilt make me also the glad thing thou art.*

Will no man's mercy show me where thou art,

That I may bring thee of all my fruit and flower,

That with low lips and with a molten heart

*I may sing all thy praises, till the dove
That I desire to have within my power
Fly at my bidding to my bosom, love?*

Clothed as with power of pinions, O my heart,

Fly like a dove, and seek one sovereign flower,

Whose thrall thou art, and sing for love of love.

Queen. It sings too southerly for this harsh north;

This were a song for summer-sleeping ears,

One to move dancing measures in men's feet

Red-shod with reek o' the vintage.
Who went there?

What! hear you not?

Mary Seyton. My lord of Bothwell's foot:

His tread rings iron, as to battle-ward.

Queen. Not his, it was not. See if it be indeed.

'Twas a good song Something he had with me—

I thank you for your song—I know not what.

Let him come in. Sir, be with us to night—

I knew it was late indeed—at supper time.

Rizzio. Madam, till night I take my loyal leave.

God give you good of all things.

[*Exit.*

Queen. Doth he mock me?

I care not neither; I know not. Stay with us.

Enter BOTHWELL.

Good morrow, sir: we bade you, did we not?

Be with us after noon; 'tis not noon near,

And you are truer than your own word; and that,

'Tis a true man's and trusty.

Bothwell. True it should be,

Madam, if truth be true, and I your thrall,

And truth's for your sake.

Queen. I would know of you—

I know not what—something there was to know.

I would you were not warden—as in truth

I think to unmake you — of the marches there.
 'Tis a fierce office. You have a royal sword,
 At least a knightly; I would not see it hacked rough
 In brawling border dangers.
Bothwell. Anywhere
 Hand, hilt, and edge are yours, to turn and take,
 Use or throw by; you know it.
Queen. I know it indeed.
 I have not many hearts with me, and hold
 Precious the hearts I have and the good hands.
 Ladies, we have somewhat with our servant here
 That needs no counsel and no ear of yours,
 So gives you leave. [*Exeunt MARIES.*
 I know not why they are gone;
 I have nothing with you secret.
Bothwell. Yea, one thing;
 You cannot help it; your face and speech and look
 Are secret with me in my secret heart.
Queen. I know not that; I would I did know that.
 'Tis yet not twelve days since I saw you wed
 To my dear friend, and with what eye you know
 Who would not, for all love that I might make
 And suit to you, give ear to me, and be
 In mine own chapel at the holy mass
 Made one with her; for all the feast we kept,
 No jewel of mine bequeathed your wife might buy
 Consent of you to take her wedded hand
 After the church-rite of her faith and mine;
 And how much love went with your policy,
 I cannot tell; yet was my will content
 That you should wed her name and house, to bring
 The race of Gordon on our side again,
 And have its ruin rebuilt and its might
 Restored to do us service; so you said,
 And so I thought I knew your mind to stand;
 Being so fast bound to me, I need not doubt
 She could but hold you by the hand, and I
 That had you by the heart need grudge not that,
 While time gave order, and expediency
 Required of us allowance; but in faith
 I know not whether there be faith or no,
 Save in my heart, wherein I know too sure
 How little wisdom is to trust in man.
 So comes it, as you see, for all my show,
 I am ill at heart, and tired.
Bothwell. 'Tis your own blame.
Queen. Yea, now, what would you have me? I am yours to do it:
 But you say nothing; yet you say too much.
 My blame it is, my weary waste of breath,
 My wretched hours and empty bloodless life,
 My sleepy vigils and my starting sleeps,
 All by my fault — if it be fault to be
 More than all men loving, all women true,
 To hunger with the foodless heart of grief,
 And wither with the tearless thirst of eyes,
 To wander in weak thought through unsown fields,
 Past unreaped sheaves of vision; to be blind,
 Weak, sick and lame of spirit and poor of soul,
 And to live loveless for love's bitter sake,
 And have to food loathing, and shame for drink,
 And see no cease or breach in my long life
 Where these might end or die; my fault it is,
 And I will kill my fault: for I that loved
 Will live to love no living thing again.
Bothwell. As you will, then.

Queen. Nay, do not tread on me;
I am lying a worm out of your way,
and you
Turn back to bruise me. I am stricken
sore enough;
Do not worse wound me; I am hurt to
the heart.
You change and shift quicker than all
good things,
That all change quickly: I am fast, and
cannot change.
If you do hold me so, fast in your
heart,
You should not surely mock me.

Bothwell. I mock you not.

You are looser and lighter-tempered
than the wind,
And say I mock you: 'tis you mock
yourself,
And much more me that wot not of
your mind;
What would you have, and would not.

Queen. Nothing, I,
Nothing but peace, and shall not. By
my faith,
I think no man ever loved woman well.
You laugh, and thrust your lips up, but
'tis truth,—

- This that I think, not your light lewd
man's thought,
But in my meaning it is bitter true.
By heaven, I have no heart for any on
earth,
Any man else, nor any matter of
man's,
But love of one man; nay, and never
had.

Bothwell. I do believe it, by myself I
do,

Who am even the self-same natured;
so I know it.

Queen. What heart have you to hurt
me? I am no fool

To hate you for your heat of natural
heart.

I know you have loved and love not all
alike,

But somewhat all; I hate you not for
that.

When have I made words of it? sought
out times

To wrangle with you? crossed you with
myself?

What have I said, what done, by saying
or deed

To vex you for my love's sake? and
have been

For my part faithful beyond reach of
faith,

Kingdomless queen, and wife unhus-
banded,

Till in you reigning I might reign and
rest.

I have kept my body, yea from wedded
bed,

And kept mine hand, yea from my
sceptre's weight,

That you might have me and my king-
dom whole:

What have these done to take you,
what to keep,

Worth one day's doing of mine yet?
Ah! you know,

For all the shape and show of things
without,

For all the marriage and the bodily
bond

And fleshly figure of community,
I have loved no man, man never hath

had me whole,
I am virgin toward you: O my love,

love, love,
This that is not yours in me I abhor,

I pray God for your sake it may be
false,

Foolish and foul: I would not have it
man,

Not manlike, and not mine, it shall not
be,

Being none of love's, and rootless in
my soul,

Not growing of my spirit but my blood;
I hate myself till it be born.

Bothwell. Ay, sweet,
You talk now loud of love; but ten
days since

Was I not 'bid love well your friend,
and be

True husband to her? what sweet-
tongued preacher then

Taught me how faith should best be
kept by change

Of passionate fear and pleasure and
bright pain

And all their strange sharp sweet so-
licitudes

For such good gifts as wisdom gives
and takes
From hand to married hand of them
that wed?
Whose counsel was this wisdom? whose
command
This that set sorrow and silence as one
seal
On the shut lips of foolishness and love?
Queen. I bade you not be wise; or, if
I bade,
It was to be obeyed not.
Bothwell. Then indeed
I did obey not, who did foolishly
To do your bidding.
Queen. Mine? did I say, Go?
Did I say, Love her? did I say, Hate
me?
As you must hate to love her. Yea,
perchance
I said all this; I know not if I said;
But all this have you done; I know
that well.
Bothwell. Indeed I have done all this
if aught I have,
And loved at all or loathed, save what
mine eye
Hath ever loathed or loved since first
it saw
That face which taught it faith, and
made it first
Think scorn to turn and look on change,
or see
How hateful in my love's sight are their
eyes
That give love's light to others.
Queen. Tell her so,
Not me; I care not though you love
your wife
So well that all strange women's eyes
and mine
Are hateful to you. Oh, what heart
have I,
That jest and wrangle? but indeed I
thought
You should do well to love her not, but
wed,
And make you strong, and get us
friends — but, nay,
God knows I know not what I thought,
or why,
When you should wed her: now I
think but this,

That if one love not, she does well to
die;
And if one love, she does not well to
live.
I pray you, go; not for my love who
pray,
But that for love's sake we thought well
to part,
And if we loved not it was well indeed.
Go.
Bothwell. To what end? and whither?
whencesoe'er,
I must come back.
Queen. Not to my feet, not mine;
Where should his end be for a married
man
To lie down lightly, with all care cast
off,
And sleep more sound than in love's
lap? for sleep
Between the two fair fiery breasts of
love
Will rest his head not oft, nor oft shut
eyes,
They say, that love's have looked on.
Bothwell. By that law,
Mine eyes must wake forever.
Queen. Nay, for shame,
Let not the fire in them that feeds on
mine
Strike fire upon my cheeks: turn off
their heat;
It takes my breath like flame, and
smothers me.
What! when I bid?
Bothwell. You have bid me do be-
fore
What you have chid me doing, but
never yet
A thing so past all nature hard, nor
now
Shall chide me for obedience.
Queen. Well — ah me! —
I lack the heart to chide; I have borne
too much,
And haply too much loved. Alas! and
now
I am fain too much to show it; but he
that made
Made me no liar, nor gave me craft
with power
To choose what I might hide at will, or
show.

I am simple-souled and sudden in my
 speech,
 Too swift and hot of heart to guard my
 lips
 Or else lie lightly: wherefore while I
 may,
 Till my time come to speak of hate or
 love,
 I will be dumb, patient as pity's self
 Gazing from Godward down on things
 of the earth,
 And dumb till the time be: would I
 were God!
 Time should be quicker to lend help
 and hand
 To men that wait on him. I will not
 wait,
 Lest I wait over-long, no more than
 need,—
 By my long love, I will not. Were I a
 man,
 I had been by this a free man.
Bothwell. Be content.
 If I have any wit of soldiership,
 'Tis not far off from this to the iron
 day
 That sets on the edge of battle, the
 bare blow,
 All that we fight or fret for. 'Tis not
 like
 Men will bear long with their own lin-
 gering hopes
 And hearts immitigable, and fiery fears
 That burn above dead ashes of things
 quenched
 Hotter for danger, and light men forth
 to fight,
 And from between the breaking ranks
 of war
 The flower must grow of all their fears
 and hopes,—
 Hopes of high promise, fears made
 quick by faith,
 Angers, ambitions; which to gather and
 wear
 Must be our toil and garland.
Queen. My heart's lord,
 I put my heart and hands into your
 hand
 To hold and help: do you what thing
 in the world
 Shall seem well to you with them, they
 content

Live with your love, or die. For my
 one part,
 I would I had done with need of for-
 ging words,
 That I might keep truth pure upon my
 lips.
 I am weary of lying, and would not
 speak word more
 To mock my heart with, and win faith
 from men,
 But for the truth's sake of my love,
 which lies
 To save the true life in me.
Bothwell. It may be
 You shall not long need to dress love
 in lies:
 This plighted plague of yours hath few
 men friends
 To put their bodies between death and
 his.
Queen. Nay, I think not; and we
 shall shape us friends
 Out of the stuff of their close enmi-
 ties,
 Wherewith he walks inwoven and
 wound about
 To the edge and end of peril; yet God
 knows
 If I for all my cause would seek his
 death,
 Whose lips have stained me with report
 as foul
 As seem to mine their kisses, that like
 brands
 Sear my shamed face with fire to think
 on them;
 Yet would I rather let him live, would
 God,
 Without mine honor or my conscience
 hurt,
 Divide from mine his star, or bid it set,
 And on my life lift up that light in
 heaven
 That is my day of the heart, my sun of
 soul,
 To shine till night shut up those loving
 eyes,
 That death could turn not from it
 though the fire
 Were quenched at heart that fed them.
 Nay, no more:
 Let me go hence, and weep not.

[Exit.]

Bothwell. Fire, in faith,
Enough to light him down the way of
the worm,
And leave me warmer. She went sud-
denly:

Doth she doubt yet? I think, by God's
light, no:

I hold her over-fast by body and soul,—
Flesh holds not spirit closer. Now
what way

To shift him over the edge and end of
life,

She laughs and talks of, yet keep fast
my foot

On the strait verge of smooth-worn
stony things

That we stand still or slide on? 'Tis
a shoal

Whereon the goodliest galleon of man's
hope,

That had no burning beacon such as
mine

Lit of her love to steer by, could not
choose

But run to wreck.

Re-enter MARY BEATON.

Mary Beaton. Pray you, my lord, a
word.

If you know aught of any new thing
here,

You will not be about the court to-
night:

If not, of my good will I counsel you,
Make hence in speed and secret, and
have hope

Till the next day lighten your days to
come.

Bothwell. I had rather the close moon
and stars a-night

Lit me to love-bed: what warm game
is here,

That I must keep mine hand out?

Mary Beaton. Such a game
As you shall win and play not, or my wit
Is fallen in sickness from me. Sir, you
know

I am your friend, I have your hap at
heart,

Glad of your good, and in your crosses
crossed:

I pray you trust me, and be close and
wise,

For love of your own luck.

Bothwell. Tell me one thing:
What hand herein shall Master David
hold?

Mary Beaton. I think he will not hold
the like alive. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—THE HIGH STREET.

BURGESSES and PEOPLE.

First Citizen. Was it not shown long
since when she came in,

If God were glad of her? Two days
and nights

Ere she brought strife among us, and
again

Two nights and days when first we saw
her face,

We saw not once by day the sun's in
heaven,

The moon's by night, or any space of
stars,

But thick sick mist corrupting the moist
air

With drench of darkness, so that scarce
at noon

Might man spy man a bow-shot's length
away;

And in man's memory on that day of
the year

Was never a more dolorous face of
heaven

Seen so to scowl on summer, as to speak
What comfort shall come with her to
this land;

But then were most eyes blind.

Second Citizen. These five years since
Has God filled full of signs that they
might see,

And sent his plagues to open them; and
most

This year or twain what portents of his
hand

Have writ us down in heaven and
trembling earth

For fearful flatterers and for faithless
friends

Whose fear and friendship have no part
in him,

Who knows not or can read not?
Famine, frost,

Storms of stars crossing, and strange
fires in the air,—

Have these no tongues to chide with?

Third Citizen. Why, at first
 A man that was no seer might see what
 end
 Should come on us that saw the mass
 come in,
 And held our hand when man by man
 fell off,
 And heart by heart was cooled of all
 its heat
 By sprinkled holy-water of the court
 In five days' space, tempering the fer-
 vent edge
 That had been fiercest on God's side:
 Lord James,
 Whose heart should weep now for it,
 or burn again
 With shame to think how he made
 strong their hands
 Who have cast him out among the
 banished lords
 That lack their life in England, kept
 himself
 The chapel-door, that none who loved
 God's law
 Might slay the idolatrous and whorish
 priest
 In his mid sin; and after mass was said
 Lord Robert and Lord John of Cold-
 ingham,
 Who then had put not off our cause,
 but sat
 With faithful men as fellows at God's
 board,
 Conveyed him to his chamber: there
 began
 The curse that yet constrains us, and
 must fall
 On more than these; of whom ye
 know this John
 Is now before the face o' the fire of
 God,
 And ere he died in desperate penitence,
 Men say, sent warning to his sister
 queen
 To turn her feet from those unquiet
 ways
 Wherein they tread behind the Pope's
 to hell.

First Citizen. His life was like his
 brother's of St. Cross,
 As foul as need or friar's or abbot's be
 That had no shameful part in a king's
 race,

And made such end as he that lives may
 make,
 Whose bastard blood is proud yet, and
 insults
 As might a prince's or a priest's indeed,
 Being truly neither, yet with either name
 Signed as in scorn; these are our lords,
 whose lust
 Breaks down men's doors to fetch their
 daughters forth,
 Even as his townsmen vexed the doors
 of Lot
 Till God sent on them fire, who spares
 but these
 For our shame's sake, because we spare,
 being men,
 And let our hands hang swordless, and
 the wrath
 Faint in our hearts, that though God
 send none down
 Should be made fire to make a fire of
 them.

Third Citizen. These fools and foul
 that with them draw the king
 To shame and riotous insolence which
 turns
 Past hope and love to loathing, — these,
 though vile,
 Have in them less of poison than men's
 tongues
 Who for the queen's love boast in what
 brief while
 They will pluck down God, and plant
 Antichrist,
 And pull out Knox by the ears: thus
 Bothwell did,
 And yet stands higher than any head
 save his
 Who in disdain of danger fills his hands
 As full of gold as are his faithless lips
 Of lies and bloody counsels, and
 requires
 No less than part in all their forfeit
 lands
 That live in exile, so to turn his name
 From loon to lord, from stranger into
 Scot,
 And next the Pope's exalt it: while
 this king
 Sets all his heart to fleshly foolishness,
 The beastlike body that eats up the
 soul
 As a bird snared and eaten; and in fear

Of God and Rimmon, with a supple
soul,
Crooks his lithe knee for craft, and bows
his back
In either's house, yet seeks no prophet's
leave,
Nor hears his saying that God shall
spew the like
Out of his mouth.

Second Citizen. Yet this good grows in
him,
That he has fallen in anger with the
queen

For her knave's sake that was his
closest friend,

Chief craftsman and main builder of
the match;

Yea, half his heart, brother and bed-
fellow,

Sworn secret on his side.

Third Citizen. There are who think
They have changed beds in very and
shameful deed,

And halved more than their own hearts.

First Citizen. He came here
On the Pope's party, against our kingly
lords,

Against the duke, our first more natu-
ral head,

Against the good-will of all godliness;
And hath he now cast their cords from
him? nay,

This is the stormy sickness of ill blood
Swelling the veins of sin in violent
youth

That makes them wrangle, but at home
and heart,

Whatever strife there seem of hands
abroad,

They are single-minded in the hate of
God.

Did he not break forth into bitterness,
Being warned by Knox of youth and
empty heart,

Yea, rail aloud as one made mad with
wine?

Did he not lay devices with this knave
That now ye say defiles him in his
wife,

To rid the noble Murray from their
way,

That they might ride with hotter spurs
for hell?

Second Citizen. God hath set strife
betwixt them, that their feet
Should not be long time out of their
own snares.

Here be the men we look for comfort
from,

Men that have God's mark sharp upon
the soul;

Stout Ochiltree, and our main stay
John Knox.

Enter JOHN KNOX and OCHILTREE.

Ochiltree. Have you yet hope that
for his people's sake

God will leave off to harden her hard
heart,

That you will yet plead with her?

John Knox. Nay, I know not;
But what I may by word or witness

borne,

That will I do, being bidden: yet indeed
I think not to bring down her height of

mind
By counsel or admonishment. Her
soul

Is as a flame of fire, insatiable,
And subtle as thin water; with her
craft

Is passion mingled so inseparably
That each gets strength from other, her
swift wit

By passion being enkindled and made
hot,

And by her wit her keen and passionate
heart

So tempered that it burn itself not out,
Consuming to no end. Never, I think,

Hath God brought up against the peo-
ple of God,

To try their force or feebleness of faith,
A foe than this more dangerous, nor of

more
More resolute against him.

Ochiltree. So long since
You prophesied of her when new come

in:
What then avails it that you counsel

her
To be not this born danger that she is,
But friends with God she hates, and

with his folk
She would root out and ruin?

John Knox. Yet this time
I am not bidden of him to cast her off

<p>I will speak once ; for here even in our eyes His enemies grow great, and cast off shame. We are haled up out of hell to heaven, and now They would fain pluck us backward by the skirt. And these men call me bitter-tongued and hard, Who am not bitter ; but their work and they Who gather garlands from the red pit-side To make foul fragrance in adulterous hair, And lift white hands to hide the fires of God, — Their sweetness and their whiteness shall he turn Bitter and black. I have no hate of her, That I should spare ; I will not spare to strive That the strong God may spare her, and not man. <i>Ochiltree.</i> Yea, both, so be we have our lost lords home, And the Pope's back-bowed changeling clean cast out And of a knave made carrion. <i>John Knox.</i> For your first, It grows as fruit out of your second wish : Come but the day that looks in his dead face, And these that hate him as he hates all good Shall have their friends home, and their honor high Which the continuance of his life keeps low. <i>Ochiltree.</i> Surely, for that, my hand or any's else Were hot enough to help him to his end. Yet when this thing is through, and this plague purged, There stands a thorn yet in our way to prick, — The loose, weak-witted, half-souled boy called king. <i>John Knox.</i> It is of him I am bidden speak with her,</p>	<p>Having but now rebuked him back-sliding In God's sight and his name. It may be yet, Whether by foolishness and envious heart, Or by some nobler touch left in his blood, — Some pulse of spirit that beats to a tune more high Than base men set their hearts by, — he will turn Helpful to Godward, serviceable in soul To good men's ends in hate of that they hate. I cannot say : howbeit, I fear not much Her love of him will keep him fast to her ; If he be drawn in bonds after her wheels, It will be but of subtle soul and craft The cords are woven that hold him. But, for me, Love they or hate, my way is clear with them : Not for her sake nor his sake shall our Lord Change counsel and turn backward ; and save his What will or wit I have to speak or live, He knows who made it little for myself, But for him great ; and be you well assured, Love of their love nor doubt of their dislike Hath upon me more power than upon God. For now I have seen him strive these divers years With spirits of men and minds exorbitant, Souls made as iron and their face as flame Full hard and hot against him, and their wits Most serpent-strong and swift, sudden of thought And overflowing of counsel, and their hands Full of their fortune, and their hearts made large To hold increase of all prosperities ;</p>
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And all these are not, and I poor man
am,

Because he hath taken and set me on
his side,

And not where these were; I am con-
tent alone

To keep mine own heart in his secret
sight

Naked and clean, well knowing that no
man born

Shall do me scathe but he hath bidden
him do,

Nor I speak word but as he hath set it
me.

First Citizen. Goes he to Holyrood?

Second Citizen. Ay, sir, by noon.

First Citizen. There is a kindling
trouble in the air;

The sun is halting toward the top of
day;

It will be shine or rain before he
come.

Ochiltree. What ails this folk to
hover at our heel,

And hang their eyes on you so heed-
fully?

John Knox. They should be natu-
rally disquieted,

Seeing what new wind makes white the
wave o' the time

We ride on out of harbor.—Sirs, ye
have heard

News of your scathe and of shame done
to God,

And the displeasure bites you by the
heart,

I doubt not, if your hearts be godly
given:

Make your souls strong in patience;
let your wrath

Be rather as iron than as fuel in fire,
Tempered and not consumed; heat

that burns out,
Leaves the hearth chillier for the flame-
less ash

Than ere the wood was kindled.

First Citizen. Master Knox,
You know us, whereto we would, and
by what way:

This too much patience burns our
cheeks with shame

That our hands are not redder than our
face

With slaying of manslayers who spill
blood of faith,

And pierce the heart of naked holiness.
It is far gone in rumor, how the queen

Will set on high and feed on gold that
man

Who was a scourge laid long since on
the saints,—

The archbishop of St. Andrew's; and
perforce,

Dyed as he stands in grain with inno-
cent blood,

Will make him mightier for our scathe
and shame

Than ere the kindly people of the word
Has made him bare of bad authority.

Second Citizen. Likewise she hath
given her seal imperial

To a lewd man and a stranger, her own
knave,

Vile, and a papist; that with harp and
song

Makes her way smoother toward the pit
of hell.

John Knox. What needs us count
and cast offences up

That all we know of, how all these
have one head,—

The hateful head of unstanched mis-
belief?

For sins are sin-begotten, and their seed
Bred of itself and singly procreative;

Nor is God served with setting this to
this

For evil evidence of several shame,
That one may say, Lo now! so many
are they;

But if one, seeing with God-illuminated
eyes

In his full face the encountering face of
sin,

Smite once the one high-fronted head,
and slay,

His will we call good service. For
myself,

If ye will make a counsellor of me,
I bid you set your hearts against one
thing

To burn it up, and keep your hearts on
fire,

Not seeking here a sign and there a
sign,

Nor curious of all casual sufferances,

But steadfast to the undoing of that thing done
Whereof ye know the being, however it be,
And all the doing abominable of God.
Who questions with a snake if the snake sting?
Who reasons of the lightning if it burn?
While these things are, deadly will these things be;
And so the curse that comes of cursed faith.

First Citizen. It is well said.

Second Citizen. Ay, and well done were well.

Third Citizen. We have borne too long for God, we that are men,
Who hath time to bear with evil if he would,
Having for life's length even eternity;
But we that have but half our life to live,
Whose half of days is swallowed of their nights,—

We take on us this lame long-suffering,
To sit more still and patienter than God,

As though we had space to doubt in, and long time

For temperate, quiet, and questionable pause.

First Citizen. Let the time come —

Second Citizen. Nay, we must make the time,

Bid the day bring forth to us the fruit we would,

Or else fare fruitless forth.

Third Citizen. It is nigh noon;

There will be shine and rain and shine ere night.

SCENE III.—HOLYROOD.

The QUEEN and RIZZIO; MARY SEYTON and MARY CARMICHAEL in attendance.

Queen. Is he so tender-tongued? it is his fear

That plucks the fang out from his hate, and makes

A stingless snake of his malignant heart;

He hath a mind—or, had he a mind at all,

Would have a mind—to mischief; but his will

Is a dumb devil.

Rizzio. Why, fear then and no love Will make faith in him out of falsehood's self,
And keep him constant through un-stableness.

Queen. Fear that makes faith may break faith; and a fool Is but in folly stable. I cannot tell If he indeed fear these men more than me;

Or if he slip their collar, whether or no He will be firm on my side, as you say,

Through very lightness; but I think not of him,
Steadfast or slippery. Would I had been that day

Handless, when I made one his hand with mine!

Yet it seemed best. I am spirit-sick and faint

With shame of his foul follies and loathed life,

Which hath no part but lewdness of a man,

Nor style of soul nor several quality,
Dividing men from men, and man from beast,

By working heart or complement of brain,—

None, very none. I will not see him to-night.

I have given command to insure our privacy.

Is it past noon?

Enter DARNLEY and MARY BEATON.

Darnley. You say she hath asked for me?

Mary Beaton. Ay, and complainingly, as though her love

Were struck at by your absence.

Darnley. Love! her love!

It were a cunning stroke should print a wound

In that which hath no substance, and no spirit

To feel the hurt. Well, I will speak to her.

Queen. How like a chidden bondman of his lord

Looks my lord now! Come you from penance, sir?

Has the kirk put you to no private shame

Besides the public tongue of broad rebuke?

We are blessed in your penitence; it is A gracious promise for you.

Darnley. Penitence?

Queen. You have a tender faith and quick remorse

That will bear buffets easily; pray God It pluck you absolution from their hands

Who are godly sparing of it. We have heard

A priest of theirs cast for incontinence Hardly with thrice purgation of his shame

Redeemed himself to kirkward.

Darnley. I hear naught.

Queen. Nay, but you hear when these rebuke you of sin

In the full face and popular ear of men; You hear them surely, and patiently you hear,

And it shows in you godliness and grace

Praiseworthy from them; for myself, my lord,

I have some foolish petulances in me And stings of pride that shut me out from grace

So sought and bought of such men; but your course

May teach me timelier humble-mindedness

And patience to get favor: which till now

I have never needed beg, and now should prove

A very witless beggar. Teach me words,

Pray you, to move men's minds with; such great men's

As your submission purchases to be Good friends and patrons to you; for I fear

Your Knox is not my friend yet.

Darnley. So I think.

Madam, I know not what you make of me,

Nor if your jest be seasonable or no;

I am no fool nor implement of theirs, Nor patienter of their irreverences Than the queen's self; if you endure such tongues,

Why, I may bear them.

Queen. Well and patiently;

I praise your manhood's temper for it, and am

The happier for your royalty of spirit That will not feel wrong done of baser men

To be at all wrong done you.

Darnley. Will you think it?

Well then, I am so, I am just your thought;

You read me right, and this our friend reads too,

For I am plain and easy to read right.

Queen. Have you made time to say so?

Darnley. Ay, and this,

That it mislikes me — it gives me discontent

That men should —

Queen. Ay? that men should — any thing —

Bear themselves manlike, or that men should be, —

It is offence done openly to you?

Darnley. Nay, not offence, nor open; naught it is,

Or to me naught.

Queen. Naught as I think, indeed.

You were about to chide us? well it is You have so humble a wife of us and true,

To make your chidings fruitful, that your words

Bear and bring forth good seed of bettering change.

I pray you, when you chide me, that you make

Your stripes the gentler for my humbleness.

Darnley. I have no mind to jest and jape, and will —

And will not wrangle with you.

Queen. Will, and will not?

They say a woman's will is made like that,

But your will yet is wilfuller than ours.

Darnley. Not as I think.

Queen. God better the king's thought,

And mind more tyrannous than is his place!

Darnley. If I be king —

Queen. And I be kingdomless,
And place be no place, and distinction die

Between the crown and curch — Well,
on, our lord.

Darnley. Why am I out of counsel
with you? Whence

Am I made show of for a titular fool,
And have no hand in enterprise of
yours,

Nor tongue, nor presence? Not alone
my name

That is rubbed out and grated off your
gold,

But myself plucked out of your register,
Made light account of, held as nothing-
ness,

Might move me —

Queen. Whither?

Darnley. To some show of wrath

More than complaint, if I were minded
ill.

Here is a breach made with the English
queen,

Our cousin of England, a wide-open
breach,

A great-grown quarrel, and I no part
of it,

Not named or known of.

Queen. You are the happier man
Heavenward, if blessed be the peace-
able.

Darnley. The happier heavenward,
being the worldlier shamed;

The less I like it. You have suddenly
cast forth

A man her servant and ambassador,
With graceless haste and instance, from
the realm,

On barren charge of bare complicity
With men now banished and in English
bounds,

But not attain of treason toward us
yet

Nor deadly doomed of justice.

Queen. Not attain?

Give not your spirit trouble for that;
the act

Is drawn by this against them, and the
estates

Need but give warrant to their forfeit-
ure,

Now it has passed the lords of the
articles.

Take no care for it; though it be sweet
in you,

And gracious, to show care of your
worst foes

You have on earth; that would have
driven you forth

A shameful rebel to your cousin queen,
And naked of our foreign favor here

That clothed you with unnatural royalty
And not your proper purple. Forth;
you say

I have done this wrong?

Darnley. I do not say you have done
Wise work nor unwise; but howbeit, I
say

I had no part in aught of it, nor knew
With what a spur's prick you provoked
her spleen

Who is not stingless to requite it you,
Nor with what scant of reason.

Queen. 'Tis sad truth,
She shows no less disquiet mind than
yours,

Nor a less loud displeasure: she was
kind,

She says, well-willed to me-ward, but
my sins,

Unkindliness, and soul's obduracy,
Have made her soft heart hard; and
for this fault

She will not ever counsel me again,
Nor cease to comfort my dear brother's
need

With gold and good compassion; and
I have

Even such a sister as brother of her as
him,

And love alike and am like loved of
them.

He wills me well, she swears, as she
herself,

And, I'll re-swear it, she wills as well
as he.

Darnley. Ay, we know whence this
wellspring of your will

Takes head and current; who must
have brave wars

We know, fair field, broad booty to
sweep up,

Space to win spurs in ; and what English gold
 Must after battle gild his heels with them,
 When he shall stand up in my father's stead,
 Lieutenant-general for you of the realm ;
 And who must have your brother's lands we know,
 Investiture must have, and chancellorship,
 And masterdom in council. Here he stands,
 A worthy witness to it : do you look on me ?
 Is it not you must be the golden sir,
 The counsel-keeper, the sole tongue of the head,
 The general man, the goodly ? Did you send
 Lord Bothwell hard at heel of him cast forth
 To make his wrong sweet with sweet-spoken words,
 And temper the sharp taste of outrage done
 And heat in him of anger, with false breath ?
 Why made you not your own tongue tunable
 Who are native to soft speaking, and who hate
 With as good heart as any Scot that hates
 England ? or is her messenger your fool
 To take blows from you and good words alike
 As it shall chance him cross your morning mood
 Angry or kindly ?
Queen. Sir, our chancellor,
 We charge you that you answer not the duke.
Darnley. Duke ?
Queen. Ay, the duke of Rothsay ; whom we pray
 Seek elsewhere some seemlier talking-stock
 To flush his hot and feverish wit upon.
Darnley. Your chancellor ? why went not such a man
 With you before the lords of the articles

Now, an hour back, and yet but half day through,
 To help you speak the banished lords to death ?
 Is't not the heart of the office, to see law
 Punish law's traitors, as you bid them be
 In the proof's teeth, who are honester than some
 You bid be law's justiciaries of them ?
 Why went he not ? 'twere no more shame nor praise
 Than here to swell in state beside your own.
Queen. Must we crave leave to bid you twice take leave,
 Or twice to ask what would you ?
Darnley. Truly this,
 A mere mean thing, an insignificance,
 If you will once more hear — oh, no-wise me,
 But just the man whose name you take in mouth
 To smite me on my face with — Master Knox.
Queen. Are you his usher going before his grace
 No less than servant to his master-word ?
 Or is it penitence and submission makes you
 In the holy way of honor and recompense
 So high in office with him ? Say, this time
 For the usher's sake I'll speak with the usher's lord :
 Yet if I mind 'twas I bade send for him
 To speak of you his servant : for I hear
 You did not at first stripe submit yourself,
 Nor take all penance with all patience, being
 Brought hardly in time to harsh humility
 Such as we see now ; which thing craves excuse
 To make you gracious in your master's eyes,
 If it be true — I would not think it were —

You brake in anger forth from the
High Kirk,
Being there rebuked, and would not sit
at meat,
But past away to hawking in pure rage
After an hour or twain of high dis-
course
Heard with plain show of sharp un-
thankfulness;
Which that you now repent, and would
redeem,
I will bear witness for you to your
lord
To make your penitential peace with
him.

Let him come in.

Darnley. I am no messenger.

Queen. Where is my chamberlain?
bid Marnock here —

Let the man in, and one man only more,
Whoever it be; we'll see him privily.
Our chancellor, and our no messenger,
We have no need of to dispute with
him.

Darnley. If I go hence —

Queen. Why, then you stay not here.

Darnley. But if I go at bidding —

Queen. Why, you go:

With the more speed, the less of tar-
riance made.
Let me not hold you half-way back:
farewell.

[*Exeunt DARNLEY and RIZZIO.*

I have not begun so luckily, nor set
So good a face on the first half of day,
Now to keep terms with mere tongue-
traitors more.

*Enter JOHN KNOX and JOHN ERSKINE
OF DUN.*

So once we are met again, sir, you and I.
Set him before us.

John Knox. I am before your grace
Without man's haling or compulsive
word:

Nor at these divers times you have sent
for me

Have you found need to use me force-
fully.

Queen. Well, let that be; as verily
meseems

'Tis I find forceful usage at your hands,
And handling such as never prince has
borne

Since first kings were; yet have I
borne with it,

Who am your natural princess, and sat
by

To hear your rigorous manner of
speaking through

As loud against my kinsfolk as myself;
Yea, I have sought your favor dili-
gently,

And friendship of my natural subject
born,

And reconciliation by all possible
means;

I have offered you at your own choice
and time

Whenso it pleased you ever admonish
me

Presence and audience; yea, have
shamed myself

With reasonless submission; have en-
dured

The naked edge of your sharp speech,
and yet

Cannot be quit of you: but here to
God

I make my vow I will be once revenged.

Give me my handkerchief. I should
take shame

That he can shame me with these tears,
to make

Mine eyes his vassals.

John Knox. Madam, true it is
There have been divers seasons of dis-
pute

Between your grace and me, wherein I
have never

Found you offended: neither now
would find

The offence I sought not; yea, I knew
this well,

If it shall please God break your
prison-house,

And lighten on your disimprisoned
soul,

That my tongue's freedom shall offend
you not.

For surely being outside the preaching-
place

I think myself no breeder of offence,
Nor one that gives man cause of wrath
and wrong;

And being therein, I speak not of my
self

<p>But as God bids who bids me, speaking plain, Flatter no flesh on earth. Lo, here I stand, A single soul and naked in his eye, Constrained of him, to do what thing he will, And dare and can none other. Hath he sent me To speak soft words of acceptable things In ladies' chambers or kings' courts, to make Their ways seem gracious to them? I wot, no. I am to bring God's gospel in men's ears, And faith therein, and penitence, which are The twain parts of it; but the chief o' the land And all the main of your nobility Give God no heed, nor them that speak for God, Through flattering fear and ill respect of you; And seeing, if one preach penitence to men, He must needs note the sin he bids repent, How should not I note these men's sin who choose To serve affections in you, and wild will, Rather than truth in God? This were lost breath, To chide the general wrong-doing of the world, And not the very present sin that burns Here in our eyes offensive, — bid serve God, And say not with what service. <i>Queen.</i> Nay, but so What is it to you, or any saving me, How this man married to me bears himself? With what sign-manual has God warranted Your inquisition of us? What am I, That my most secret sanctuaries of life And private passages of hours should be</p>	<p>Food for men's eyes, or pavement for men's feet To peer and pasture, track and tread upon, Insult with instance? Am I only bound To let the common mouth communicate In my life's sweet or bitter sacrament, The wine poured, the bread broken every day? To walk before men bare, that they may judge If I were born with any spot or no, And praise my naked nature? to subject Mine unsubmitted soul subordinate To popular sight and sentence? What am I, That I should be alone debarred, deposed, From the poor right of poor men, who may live Some hour or twain unchallenged of the day, And make to no man answer what they do As I to mine must render? who is this That takes in hand such hard things and such high? Sir, what man are you, that I need account For this word said, or that, or such things done, Only to you or mainly, of myself? Yea, what are you within this commonwealth? <i>John Knox.</i> A man within it, and a subject born, Madam; and howsoever no great man, Earl, lord, nor baron to bear rule therein, Yet has God made me a profitable man, How abject I seem ever in your eye, No member of the same unmeritable. Yea, madam, this pertains not less to me Than any of all your noble-nurtured men, To warn men of what things may hurt the same, So as I see them dangerous; and here in</p>
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My conscience and mine office with one tongue	To find your favor. I beseech you think
Crave plainness of me : wherefore to yourself	That here is no disloyalty designed, Nor thing dishonorable ; for were men mad
I say the thing I speak in public place :	Whose wits are whole, and false whose faiths are sound,
That what great men soever at any time	The very mouth of madness would speak sense,
Shall be consenting to your lord's un- faith	The very tongue of treason would speak truth,
Or flattering furtherance of unfaith in you,	For love and service of your royalty ; Blind curses bless, and red rebellion bow,
They do what in them lieth to cast out Christ,	That came to burn and threaten. Do not dream
Banish his truth, betray his liberty	That a man faithful Godward and well loved
And free right of this realm, and in the end	Can be to you-ward evil-willed, who have
Shall haply do small comfort to your- self.	Power on your natural and your born unfriends
And for him too, your husband, it may be	To bind their good-will to you.
That as he spares not to dishonor God	<i>Queen.</i> Words, all words ;
For your delight, by service of the mass,	I am weary of words : I have heard words enough
God will not spare to smite him by your hand	To build and break, if breath could break or build,
That faithlessly he fawns on to his loss.	Centuries of men. What would they with me, sir ?
<i>Queen.</i> When was there queen so handled in the world ?	These my liege folk that love me to the death,—
I would I could not weep ; for being thus used	Their death or mine, no matter,—my fast friends
I needs must never or now. Is this light day ?	Whose comfortable balms so bruise my head
Am I asleep, or mad, or in a trance,	It cannot hold the crown up ; these good hands
That have such words to beat about mine ears,	That wring my wrist round to wrench out the staff
And in mine eyes his present face who speaks ?	God set into mine own ; these loving lips
<i>Erskine of Dun.</i> Madam, I pray your grace contain your mood,	That take my name upon them as to kiss,
And keep your noble temperance of yourself,	And leave it rank with foam of hateful speech ?
For your high sake and honor, who are held	Must I be dead deposed, or must I live Strip'd shameless, naked to the very name,
For excellence of spirit and natural soul	A crestless creature and displumed, that feeds
As sovereign born as for your face and place,	On charities and chances ? will they give
Kingdom, and kingly beauty ; to whose might	
The worthiest of the world, all Europe's chief,	
Her choice of crowns, might gladly bow themselves	

<p>Me, their queen born, me, bread or dust to eat, With a mouth water-moistened or a dry, Beggared or buried? shall I hold my head In shameful fief and tenantry of these For their least wind of any wrath that blows To storm it off my shoulders? What were I That being so born should be born such a thing As bondsmen might bemock the bond- age of And slaves contemn for slavery? Nay, no words: A word may wound, and no word heal again, As none can me — whom all men's words may wound — Who am liable to all buffets of men's tongues, All stripes of all their scandals — and was born To no such fear — and have nor tongue nor wit To plead and gather favor — no such grace As may get grace, no piteous skilful- ness — Only my truth and tears; and would to God My tears and truth for you were wind and fire To burn and blow corruption from the world, And leave pure peace to breed where you plant war, And make the furrows fat with pesti- lence And the grain swell with treason! but, too sure, They too can hurt, and heal not. I am soul-sick With shame and bitter weakness; yet, God's will, I may take strength about me to put off Some part of shame. Sir, you that make me weep, By these my tears and my sharp shame of them</p>	<p>I swear you will not laugh to see me laugh, When my time comes: you shall not; I will have Time to my friend yet; I shall see you, sir, If you can weep or no, that with dry eyes Have seen mine wet; I will try that: look to it. <i>John Knox.</i> Madam, — I speak in very eye of God, — I never took delight in any tears Shed of God's creatures; yea, for my self-sake, I can but very hardly abide the tears Of mine own boys whom mine own hand and love Chastens, and much less can take any joy In this the weeping of your majesty. But, seeing I have given you no offen- sive cause Nor just occasion, but have spoken truth After mine office as mine own place craves Lest I, God's man, be man-sworn to God's truth, I must sustain, howbeit unwillingly, Rather these tears drawn of your majesty Than blood of mine own conscience stabbed to death Or through my silence of my common- wealth By my dumb treason wounded. <i>Queen.</i> A fair word: I thought it was forgotten of men's mouths, And only lived in the inner heat of the heart, Too sure to want the spelling of their speech. Sir, you shall find it in my very tears, — This blood you fear for of your com- monwealth, And in the hurts of mine authority The wounds it lies abed with; what, God help, Can the head bleed, and not the body faint? Or wherein should the kingdom feel such maim</p>
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As in the kingship stricken? there are
 you,
 If you be true man, and each true man
 born
 Subject, and circled with the bound of
 rule,
 Hurt to the heart. But heartless things
 are words:
 Henceforth I will not mix my speech
 with yours
 In the way of disputation ever more,
 Nor set against your tongue the plea of
 mine
 To reason as its equal. Wait you here,
 Here in the chamber: you, sir, come
 with me
 To counsel in my cabinet somewhat;
 We will return his answer.
 [*Exeunt* QUEEN and ERSKINE OF DUN.
Mary Carmichael. She wept sore;
 I never saw her spirit, so chafed, so
 melt
 And thaw to such mere passion; this
 one time
 He is sure attained.
Mary Beaton. Ay, she fain would
 dare
 Upon the spur of the hour attain him;
 yet
 What none dare else, she durst not:
 they will put
 Force of fair words as bridle in the
 mouth
 Of her wild will and reainless.
Mary Seyton. She is wise,
 And fights not wisdom, but being coun-
 selled well
 Takes truce with time and tongueless
 policy.
 What! will the man speak to us? he
 looks so hard
 With such fast eyes and sad; I had
 not thought
 His face so great, nor presence.
John Knox. Ah! fair ladies,
 How fair were this your life and pleas-
 urable
 If this might ever abide, and so in the
 end
 With all this gay gear we might pass
 to heaven!
 But fie upon that knave, Death, that
 will come,

Whether we will or will not: and being
 come,
 When he has laid on his assured arrest,
 The foul worms will be busy with this
 flesh,
 Be it never so fair and tender; and the
 soul,
 The silly soul shall be so feeble, I fear,
 It can bear with it neither gold nor
 pearl,
 Painting of face, garnish, nor precious
 stones.
Mary Beaton. Sir, for myself, small
 joy this were to me,
 That this life should live ever; nor
 would I
 Care much by praying to stretch my
 days of life
 Into more length, nor much to take
 with me
 Garnish or gold: but one thing I would
 fain
 Have to go grave-wards with me, and
 keep it safe,
 That you have cast no word or warning
 on,
 And yet women, whose hearts are
 worldly worn
 And by no creed of yours consolable,
 Nor gladness of your gospel, love its
 name
 As dear as God's; and its name is but
 rest.
John Knox. Rest has no other name
 but only God's.
Mary Beaton. But God has many an-
 other name than rest:
 His name is life, and life's is weariness.
John Knox. Ay, but not his: that
 life has lost his name;
 Peace is his name, and justice.
Mary Beaton. Ah, sir! see,
 Can these two names be one name
 on earth
 Can two keep house together that have
 name
 Justice and peace? where is that man
 i' the world
 Who have found peace in the arms of
 justice lain,
 Or justice at the breast of peace asleep?
 Is not God's justice painted like as
 ours,

A strong man armed, a swordsman red
as fire,
Whose hands are hard, and his feet
washed in blood?
It were an iron peace should sleep with
him,
And rest were unrest that should kiss
his lips.
What man would look on justice here,
and live,
Peace has no more part in him.

John Knox. Lady, nay,
That only peace indeed which is of God
Hath in the just man not a part, but
all,
But the whole righteous life and heart
in him
Still peacefully possesses; who hath
not
Or loves not justice, he can love not
peace,
For peace is just; and that thing is not
peace
That such men love, but full of strife
and lies,
A thing of thorns and treasons. This
were even

As if a man loving a harlot should
Praise her for maiden and himself for
pure
To love such maidenhood, when any
says
That he loves peace who loves not
holiness;
For peace is holy. Yea, and if one
seek
He shall find peace where bitterest
justice is,
In the full fire and middle might of
wrath,
Rather than where sloth sucks the lips
of shame
Or fear with her foul brother unbelief
Lives in adultery; strife is that which
springs,
As a winged worm and poisonous, of
their sheets;
And in the slumberless and storm-
strewn bed
That very war's self spreads for right-
eousness
Peace as a babe is born.

Mary Beaton. Would God it were!

For 'tis a bitter childbed: these long
years
We look for fruit, and none comes forth
of it,
But yet more iron travail; and our-
selves,
Desiring justice, quite lose hold of
peace,
And are distracted with our own fierce
want
And hungry need of right unreachable.
Yet it may come, and then shall peace
indeed.

John Knox. You talk against your
habit.

Re-enter ERSKINE OF DUN.

Erskine of Dun. Master Knox,
The queen will no more hear you at
this time,
But with good-will and gracious mind
will weigh
Your worth and worthy meaning in
your words.

John Knox. It may be she will never
hear me more.
Farewell, fair ladies; may God look
on you,
And give you chiefly comfort, which is
grace.

[*Exeunt* JOHN KNOX and ERSKINE OF
DUN.

Mary Seyton. Why did you prate so
preacher-like with him?

Mary Beaton. I cannot tell by asking
of myself,
Nor answer for your asking. Which
of you

Shall wait at supper on the queen to-
night?

Mary Carmichael. None but her coun-
sel of close hours, Argyle.

Mary Beaton. She sups with them;
and in attendance there
Some two or three I heard of, - - one of
these

No man of arms.

Mary Seyton. What should they do
with arms?

More need of lips to sing with.

Mary Beaton. Ay, to sing:
It is no matter of state they meet upon?

Mary Seyton. Are your wits lost in-
deed, or do you jest?

Mary Douglas. Then I should be his
 as subjects it shall.

They shall be mistress in the lesser
 town.—

They shall and strive to make the
 music up.

Mary Douglas. With his own hand?

Mary Douglas. Nothing I did thought
 I had but think what music he should
 make.

After this preacher. Let us to the
 queen.

SCENE IV.—DARNLEY'S ROOM.

DARNLEY and SIR GEORGE DOUGLAS.

Darnley. I think our friend of Mor-
 ton had grown slack.

But for my speaking, none.

Sir George Douglas. Nay, he is firm:
 You do him less right than you do
 yourself.

To think he should need quickening.

Darnley. Oh, I know not:
 What should I know? what wit have I
 to know?

I am a fool, and have no forethought:
 Why,

But for my resolute instance at this
 need,—

I said to him, Be resolute,—and since
 then,

Some six or eight hours gone, I have
 heard such things

As would put sense and passion in
 dead bones,—

By God I have; it shall be seen I have.
 But are you sure it should be done to-
 night?

Sir George Douglas. Ay, surely.

Darnley. Well, I see no surety in it.
 Methinks now, every day we let him
 live

Blows hot the popular wrath of all the
 land,

And makes us surer, when we strike
 indeed,

That all men's hearts will stab him
 with our hands.

Sir George Douglas. By which ac-
 count he might live long, and die

An old white death and woundless. Is
 not this

The man whereof you told me some
 while since

How at some midnight, your wife's
 doors being locked,

You burst them open, and gat hold of
 him

Had in a closet of her bedchamber,
 Save for furrow'd gown and shirt about
 the knee

Naked? and must you take him so
 again,

And be so twice get clear of you, and
 laugh?

You swore me that: what need to tell
 or swear,

If he must live still? weeping, with
 clenched hands,

You swore it, praying me for our
 shame's sake send

Word to your uncle Ruthven; but
 what need,

If there were no shame in the thing at
 all,

Or but so little, as now so little it
 seems,

There is no haste to slay him?

Darnley. Nay, you carp:
 'Tis thus men ever catch at my good
 words,

To turn them on their tongues, and spit
 them out

Changed and discolored. He shall
 die to-night.

Sir George Douglas. Assuredly.

Darnley. I say so,—mark, I say it,
 I that have cause: how else could it be
 sure?

But sure it is,—I say he shall not live.
 Let us go seek Lord Morton out again,
 And tell him it is sworn we strike to-
 night.

How many of us have hands in it with
 me,

Who cannot with mine own hand as I
 would

Strike—it were shameful to me—
 were it not?

For mine own hand's sake.

Sir George Douglas. There are hands
 enough

Without the shame done to your high-
 ness' hand:

Sufficieth us we have it set to the bond

That signs him dead; nor need we
sum their names

Whose hands will strike, not spare, for
their own sakes.

Darnley. Well, let us go to make my
lord's faith sure

That it shall be no later than to-night.

SCENE V.—THE QUEEN'S CABINET.

*The QUEEN, RIZZIO, COUNTESS OF
ARGYLE, LORD ROBERT STUART,
ARTHUR ERSKINE, in attendance.*

Queen. Have I not done a queenlike
work to-day?

I have made attain't my traitors of my-
self;

With no man at my hand to strengthen
me,

Have gone before the lords of the
articles,

And set my will upon them like a seal,
And they for their part set on their old
friends

The bloody seal of treason signed of
death

And countersigned of burning igno-
miny.

You are half fearful, you, lord chancel-
lor,

You my good servant; but I knew their
necks

Were made to take the impression of
my foot,

Their wills and souls the likeness of
mine own,

And I have used them for the things
they are.

Countess of Argyle. You have been
right royal, madam, and your
lovers

Have joyful cause to praise you.

Queen. Will you say it,

Who bear as much part in his blood
as I

Of our dead father's giving? then I
think

No other tongue for love of Murray
slain

Shall sting me though mine own speak
off his head,

Once caught up out of England; nay,
I think

We shall get vantage of your lord's
friend Knox

Ere many days be.

Countess of Argyle. Speed your maj-
esty!

The cord were hallowed that should
silence him.

Queen. Ay, though mine own hands
twist it. To spin hemp

For such a throat, so loud and eloquent,
Should better please me, and seem a

queenlier thing,
Than to weave silk, and flower it with

fine gold.

He hath a tongue to tame a tiger with,
Fright into fierce and violent reverence

The fearfullest earth's monsters. I do
think

I like him better than his creed-fellows
Whose lips are softer toward me; 'tis

some sport

To set my wit to his, and match with
mine

The shrewd and fiery temper of his
spirit

For trial of true mastery: yet to-day
He made me weep, weep mightily—by

faith,

If there be faith in any lips of earth,
I think to live, and laugh at his tears

yet.

Robert Stuart. I would the hand were
on him that might make

His eyes weep red, and drop out of
their rings,

Looking on death. What reason gives
him leave,

What right makes room for him to take
his way

So past men's patience grown so master-
ful?

Had I one half word's warrant of your
grace,

His tongue should not be long inside
his lips.

Queen. I am no wife of Antony, to
try

My needle's point against his tongue's
edge; yet

I have cause as good as Fulvia's, though
his speech

Ring somewhat short of Roman. Here
is one

[Faint, mostly illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

The man wherof you told me some
 while since
 How is those matters, your wife's
 story being told?
 'Tis done them open, and gat hold of
 him
 In a closer in her bedchamber,
 save for virtue grown and start about
 the shame
 What? and must you take him so
 again?
 And he is now get clear of you, and
 laugh?
 The swore me that: what need to tell
 it swear?
 He is must the still? weeping, with
 mended laces.
 The swore in drawing me for our
 shame's sake send
 With in your name Kathven; but
 what need?
 If there were no shame in the thing at
 all
 It but so little, as now so little it
 seems.
 There is no taste to say him?
 George. Nay, you carp:
 'Tis thus men ever catch at my good
 words.
 To hurt them in their tongues, and spit
 them out
 Manger and discolored. He shall
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 Sir George Douglas. Assuredly.
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 that have cause: how else could it be
 sure?
 But sure it is — I say he shall not live.
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 And tell him it is sworn we strike to-
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 How many of us have hands in it with
 me.
 Who cannot with mine own hand as I
 would
 Strike — it were shameful to me —
 were it not?
 For mine own hand's sake.
 Sir George Douglas. There are hands
 enough
 Without the shame done to your high-
 ness' hand:
 Submit us we have it set to the bond

That signs him dead; nor need we
sum their names

Whose hands will strike, not spare, for
their own sakes.

Darnley. Well, let us go to make my
lord's faith sure
That it shall be no later than to-night.

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friends

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miny.

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lor,

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as I

Of our dead father's giving? then I
think

No other tongue for love of Murray
slain

Shall sting me though mine own speak
off his head,

Once caught up out of England; nay,
I think

We shall get vengeance in your lord's
friend's blood

Ere many tapers.

Countess of Argyle. Spent your time
easy

The cord were halloved that should
silence him.

Queen. An' though mine own hands
twist it, I'll soon undo

For such a trifling word and eloquent,
Should better please me and seem a
queenlier thing,

Than to weave silk and flower it with
fine gold.

He hath a tongue to tame a tiger with,
Fright into fierce and silent reverence

The fearfulest earth's monsters. I do
think

I like him better than his creed-fellows
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some sport

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His eyes weep red, and drop out of
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Looking on death. What reason gives
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What right makes room for him to take
his way

So past men's patience grown so man-
terful?

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His tongue should not be long made
his lips.

Queen. I am no wife of Antony, to
try

My needle's point against his tongue's
edge; yet

I have cause as good as Fulvia's, though
his speech

Ring somewhat short of Roman. Here
is one

That has that southern honey on his lips
 Frozen as it seems up with this galling
 air,
 And not a note left golden, but his
 tongue
 Nipt with the chill to death as with a
 knife
 That cuts us short of music.
Countess of Argyle. Yea, my lord,
 Why will you so discomfort the good
 hour
 With tongueless sadness? We have
 cause to chide,
 That, having cause to sing, find song to
 seek
 And thought to find it ready.
Rizzio. I have been sad
 These two hours back; I know not
 what it was
 So struck me out of mirth, for I was
 merry,
 And knew not why.
Queen. Nay, if you love me, sir,
 You had reason to be merry with my
 mirth
 Who am blithe to be found queen over
 my foes.
 I have been glad all this good day
 thereof
 Save some few minutes that my subject-
 saint
 Vexed even to mere intemperance; but
 few tears
 Wept out that little bitter part of day,
 And left it sweet. Have you not heard
 men say
 This heaviness without a root of fear
 Goes oft before some good? now should
 there be
 Some new thing hard upon us that will
 make
 All good hearts glad. Have you no
 song to mock
 The-doubt away that mocks you?
Rizzio. At your will.
 I am something yet in tune for such a
 song
 As joy makes out of sorrow, when the
 thought
 Plays with false grief for joy's sake.
 Please you hear it
 With such light audience as its worth
 is light?

Queen. Ay, such a note should fit me
 for this time;
 After the tuneless toil of talking day,
 A light song lightly brings ill thoughts
 asleep.

RIZZIO (*sings*).

*Lord Love went Maying
 Where Time was playing,
 In light hands weighing
 Light hearts with sad;
 Crowned king with peasant,
 Pale past with present,
 Harsh hours with pleasant,
 Good hopes with bad;
 Nor dreamed how fecter
 Than Time's swift metre,
 O'er all things sweeter
 How clothed with power,
 The murderess maiden
 Mistrust walks laden
 With red fruit ruined and
 dead white flower.*

*How close behind him
 Ere man's faith find him,
 How strong to bind him
 With fears for bands,
 Lest once beholden
 Of man the golden
 God's face embolden
 All hearts and hands;
 For if doubt were not,
 Whose sore shafts spare not,
 Large life would care not
 For death's poor hour,
 Seeing all life's season
 By love's sweet reason
 Made wise would seem in his
 eyes a flower.*

Countess of Argyle. Did you hear
 that?

Robert Stuart. What?

Queen. Nothing but sweet words.

Countess of Argyle. I heard a cry i'
 the wind as of one hurt.

Arthur Erskine. There is no wind
 up, madam.

Queen. Peace, I pray;

It was your own sense mocked you.
 Hear it through;

There should be more, and sadder.

Countess of Argyle. Nay, I heard.

RIZZIO (*sings*).

*By Love's side flying
As Time went crying
Glad news and lying
In all men's ears,
With blind feet gliding
She came deriding
Their joyous tiding
That ends in tears ;
From Time's side sailing
As Love sank quailing,
Her strong wings sailing
Made all heads cower,
Her wings untethered,
With fleet thoughts feathered,
Made weak the summer and bleak
the flower.*

*Hope found no cover
Wherein to hover,
And Love no lover,
And Joy no place ;
Till when Time creeping
Had left him sleeping,
Love knelt down weeping
Before her face,
And prayed, soul-stricken,
One flower might quicken,
Though spring should sicken
And storm devour ;
She from her bosom
Flung one sere blossom,
Then passed him dead on the last
dead flower.*

Robert Stuart. Hark! some one laughed there.

Queen. What does death i' the song?
Can they not let love live, but must needs make
His grave with singing? 'Tis the trick
of song

That finds no way to end else.

Rizzio. An old trick ;
Your merrier songs are mournfuller
sometimes

Than very tears are.

Queen. Do you hear noises still?

Enter DARNLEY.

Who sent you to us?

Darnley. My love to my sweet lady.

[*Kisses her.*]

Queen. What feet are theirs behind
you? Who stands there?

Darnley. Nay, nothing, nay, sweet,
nothing.

Queen. I should know —
Judas! [*Seeing RUTHVEN in the door.*]

Darnley. I tell you —

Ruthven. Let that man come forth ;
He hath been here too long.

Queen. What hath he done?

Ruthven. So please your highness,
how he hath done you wrong
To offend the honor of your majesty,
I dare not boldly say ; but this I
dare,

He hath done the king your husband's
honor wrong

In this past all the rest, to hinder him
Of the crown matrimonial, which your
grace

Made his by promise. Other wrongs
than this

Are more than I need speak of : for
the lords,

He hath caused you banish a great part
of them,

And the most chief, and at this parlia-
ment

Forefault them as for treason, that him-
self

Who jets here in his cap and damask
gown

Might of your grace be made a lord, and
tread

On men more noble : wherefore with
good cause

For very love I pray your majesty
Make not yourself his buckler who

lacks heart
Save to pluck forth his hanger, and not
strike,

But cower behind, and clasp your gown
for shield.

Stand from before the window, lest
perforce

I hale him hence by the hair.

Queen. Help us, our friends!
Thrust out this death-faced traitor.

Arthur Erskine. Sir, give way.
Robert Stuart. Out of this presence!

Ruthven. Lay no hands on me;
Stand; I will not be handled. [*Draws.*
*Enter FAULDONSIDE and SIR
GEORGE DOUGLAS.*
Queen. Out with him!
Rissio. Save, save me, madam!
Queen. You are within my ward.
Stand from him, sirs; what! treason!
Fauldonside. Nay, then, thus.
[*Putting a pistol to her breast.*
Queen. Do him no wrong; ye dare
not murder me:
If he have sinned, let justice pass on him.
Fauldonside. This cord shall justify
him.
Rissio. Help me! help!
Sir George Douglas. Let go the queen.
Rissio. Help me, my mistress!
Fauldonside. Out!
Queen. Have mercy!
Rissio. Mercy! nay, I am innocent!
Save me, sweet lady!
Queen. Will ye slay me too?
Fauldonside. Drag him away; pluck
his hands off her.
Rissio. Help!
[*They force him out.*
Queen. Why does that sheath sit
empty on your side?
Where is the dagger?
Darnley. Why, I know not where.
Queen. It will be known hereafter; it
shall be
Dear blood to some of you if David's
here
Be spilt, my faithful servant's; but may
God,
My poor true friend, have mercy on
your soul!
Ruthven. Here, take your wife into
your arms, my lord,
And bid her fear not. — Madam, have
no fear;
We had sooner spend the blood of our
own hearts
Than you should suffer harm; and
what we do
Is but your husband's bidding. Let
them pass:
He shall be kept for this time safe
enough
In my lord's chamber here.

Darnley. Ay shall he, safe —
In that same chamber where you used
of old,
Before this fellow grew so in your grace,
To come and seek me; but since he so
fell
In credit with you and familiar use,
Even if I come to yours I find of late
Small entertainment of you, save so
far
As David may sit third with us, and
set
To cards with you even till an hour or
twain
Be gone past midnight.
Queen. I have heard not said
It was a duteous gentlewoman's part
To seek her husband's chamber, but the
man's
To seek the wife when he would aught
with her.
Darnley. Why came you to my cham-
ber, then, at first,
And ever till these few months back
that he
Became familiar with you? or am I
In any part now of my body failed,
To fall out of your grace? or what dis-
dain
Have you of me? or what offence of
mine
Makes you not use me at all times
alike,
Seeing I am willing to do all good
things
That may become a husband to his
wife?
Queen. My lord, of all the shame
here done to me,
You have the fault: for which sake I
henceforth
Shall never be your wife, nor lie with
you,
Nor ever shall have liking of my life
Till I may make you bear as sore a
heart
As I bear now.
Ruthven. Madam, for honor's sake,
Be reasonably and timely reconciled
To your wed lord; and with him take
advice
Of such good friends as love you. Give
me leave:

I am faint, and cannot stand to plead
with you. [Sits.]
Bring me to drink, for God's sake.
Darnley. Give my lord
A cup of wine.
Queen. Is this your malady?
If ye shall slay me or my six-months'
child
By this night's force and fear, my
friends yet live
To wreak me of Lord Ruthven.
Ruthven. Be content.
Queen. When word goes forth how I
am handled here —
What, am I kinless, think you, without
help?
Mine uncles, and my brother king of
France,
All lords of all lands living, all heads
crowned,
Shall be one storm to shake you from
the world;
And the Pope with me, and the Catho-
lic king,
And all that live or of my faith or
blood,
Shall all make way upon you.
Ruthven. I am too mean
That these so many and mighty should
take aim
At one such poor man here as I am.
See,
If you will weigh it worthily yourself,
This is no treason; never till this night
Was so good service done you. For
myself,
I will make answer to God's charge
and man's
How I have served you in it.
Queen. What have I done?
What thing am I, that ye should use me
thus?
O miserable and desertless that I am,
Unkingdomed of mine honor! I that
had
Lordship of land and natural rule of
men
Am poorer here than any landless man,
And weaker than all women. Pray
you, sir,
By what law's sentence am I made
man's thrall?
What lord have I offended that can bid

My face for shame be covered in your
sight?
Whom have I wronged? or who hath
power on me,
What thing soever I be, to do me
wrong?
Who hath given forth judgment on me?
what man's right
Calls me his servant? Nay, there is no
slave
Men strike without a sentence; and ye
strike
Your own right in me and your name
to death
With one self-ruinous violence.
Ruthven. Be at peace;
We strike but your own sickness off
yourself,
Who cut off him to save you: the dis-
ease
That dies of the physician leaves no
cause
That you should curse, but thank him.
Queen. Thank? ay, thank —
God give me grace to give you thanks!
be sure
Ye shall not lack my memory to it, nor
will
To made me worthy of you. What!
no more?
[Exit RUTHVEN.]
I thought his wrath was large enough
for me
To find a murderous part in where to
die,
And share it with my servant. Must I
live?
Sir, you that make death warm between
your lips,
And, silent, let fall murder from your
mouth,
Have you no kiss to kill me? no love
left
To give me poison? Why is he gone
forth?
Hath the hot falsehood eaten through
your tongue?
Speak.
Darnley. Why, I bade him look to
those your friends
That might have risen upon us; hear
you that?

[Noise outside.]

There is a clamor of them in the courts,
 But naught to help or hurt now. He is gone
 To read our will out in the general ear,
 And by proclaiming of my share with them
 In this their new-born justice to make sure
 Men's hearts that hearken; and lest fear shake our friends,
 Or ill-will toward us and good-will toward you
 Make our foes strong in malice of design,
 To warn them of your brother's present speed,
 Who must be here with morning: my device,
 My trick to win all faiths that hang on him
 And tie them to my service with his hand.
 So have we all souls instant on our side,
 And you no way to wound us: for by this,
 Even with the hearing of my name given forth
 As parcel of the bond that writes him dead,
 Which is now cancelled with his blood-shedding,
 This your good town is with us, and your lords
 That stood for you with this man fled or dead,
 If they dare strike or stand yet. What shift now?
 What wit? what craft?
Queen. My friends driven forth the court?
 No help upon my side? The town raised too?
Darnley. We had no heart nor wit to work with, ha?
 We were your fools, and heartless?
Queen (at the window). Help, all friends!
 All good men help your queen here!
 Ho, my lord,
 My lord the Provost!
Darnley. He is raised indeed.

Queen. Help for the queen! help, Provost!
Darnley. Peace, I say;
 You may fare worse: these are wild hours.
Voice without. Sit down;
 You shall be hewn in pieces if you stir,
 And flung into the Nor'-Loch.
Darnley. Nay, be wise;
 Pluck not their madness on you.
Queen. Oh, your love!
 It shows now kindly in you.
Re-enter RUTHVEN.
Ruthven. All is sped;
 The lords of the adverse party being roused up
 And hearing with what large applause of men
 The reading of our sentence in the bond
 And names subscribed, and proclamation made
 Of Murray even at heel of the act returned,
 Was of all mouths made welcome, in fierce haste
 Forth of their lodging fled confusedly
 With no more tarriance than to bring their lives
 Clear of the press and cry of peril at hand,
 And their folk round them in a beaten rank
 Hurl'd all together; so no man being left,—
 The earls of Huntley and of Bothwell gone,—
 To lift a hand against the general peace,
 The townsmen, of their surety satisfied,
 Brake up with acclamation of content
 For the good comfort done them in this deed.
Queen. What have ye made my servant?
Ruthven. A dead dog.
 His turn is done of service.
Darnley. Yea, stark dead?
Ruthven. They stabbed him through and through with edge on edge
 Till all their points met in him; there he lies,

Cast forth in the outer lodge, a piteous
knave

And poor enough to look on.

Queen. I am content.

Now must I study how to be revenged.

Darnley. Nay, think not that way:
make it not so much;

Be warned, and wiser.

Queen. Must I not, my lord?

You have taught me worthier wisdom
than of words;

And I will lay it up against my heart.

ACT II.—BOTHWELL.

*Time, from March 10, 1566, to February
9, 1567.*

SCENE I.—THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER.

*Enter DARNLEY and ARTHUR ERSKINE,
severally.*

Darnley. Is the queen risen?

Arthur Erskine. She has not slept,
my lord.

They say she is in some peril of mis-
hap

Through the sore handling of this vio-
lent night,—

Mortal mishap it may be.

Darnley. Ay! who say it?

What should be mortal to her? she
was not sick,

Nor near enough her danger.

Arthur Erskine. I am no leech:

Haply the fright of murderous menaces
And noise of swords is held medicinal;

The savor of a slain friend comforta-
ble,

And his blood balm: if these be health-
ful things,

You have given her weakness physic.

Enter the QUEEN.

Queen. Ah, our lord!

Comes he with death about him? I
could take it

As readily as condemned men take re-
prieve,

For of a life much deadlier than itself
Death would reprieve me.

Darnley. I am come to bring you
help.

Queen. You are ever helpful, even at
all needs good,

For stroke or speech, good always. I
am weak;

Let me have execution swift or soft;

Here is no strength to suffer.

Darnley. Sit, and rest.

Queen. Nay, I can stand; or should
I kneel, my plight

Were one with my new fortune. You
may go:

I have but private penitence to do,
And privy grace to get me; for indeed
I were stark mad to hope by any

mean
For public pardon; I am condemned,
and have

No hope but of such pity as dead men
gain

Who living found no grace in the great
world.

[*Exit ARTHUR ERSKINE.*

Now, what death, sir?

Darnley. You think not as you speak;
Your thought has other business than

your tongue,
And death has no part in it.

Queen. I am assured

I must not live.

Darnley. Whose doom has passed on
you?

Not mine; I would not have you go in
fear:

You may be safe as I am.

Queen. As you, my lord?

I think I may, and yet may chance but
find

A little day of surety.

Darnley. By mine honor,

My word and place of sovereignty is
pledged

For your fair usage; they that unseat
you

Shall find no king in me.

Queen. Nay, I think not.

Darnley. As they would have me
friend and firm to them,

I told them, they should use you roy-
ally,

No state or privilege plucked off you;
nay,

I have no thought by stolen strength of
yours

To increase myself out of your weak-
 ness; only
 I would have royalty remade in you,
 And in your honor an honorable part;
 See the state in you and the name shine
 fair,
 And in your praise mine own praise
 perfected
 As parcel of it, and in your good fame
 Mine own fame stablished; as from
 your repute
 Shaken or sullied, my name too takes
 soil,
 And in your insufficiency I wax weak,
 So would I have the grace I gain and
 strength
 Redound to you-ward; who being queen
 indeed,
 I cannot seem unkingly.
Queen. 'Tis well thought.
 It was my curse to know not in good
 time
 How high a sense and royal of itself
 I had in you so near me.
Darnley. That your thought,
 Misdemeaning me worth no more weight
 with you,
 Hath brought us to this breach. Now
 lies it in you
 To make all whole; these lords that in
 my name
 And for mine ends and with my leave
 rose up
 To rid out peril and scandal from us all,
 And make red-handed witness of them-
 selves
 Against the shame and scathe of roy-
 alty,
 Are not the traitors of your thought,
 but keep
 Faith flawless toward the personal em-
 pire here
 And spirit of rule, dishonoring not the
 law
 By forceful chastisement of secret
 breach
 That did it bloodless violence; this
 blood shed
 Must heal indeed the privy hurt of law
 And all but death of kingship, in such
 pass
 Wasted and wounded; but no hand of
 theirs

Would stab through you your holy
 majesty,
 Cut off all life of law with yours, and
 make
 Authority die with you one visible
 death;
 No thought put out your office, though
 yourself
 Were found come short thereof, to leave
 this land
 A kingless kingdom; wherefore with
 good-will
 I counsel you make peace with their
 designs
 And friends with mine intent, which for
 us both
 Is but all power and honor.
Queen. So you see it;
 But were your eyes no flatterers of
 themselves,
 The sight were other: yet for my poor
 part
 I cannot care though power be out of
 sight,
 Save that mine honor visibly is marred
 By wreck in you of either; for in-
 deed
 Nor power nor honor shall hang on to
 you
 If you must wear them but at will of
 men,
 And by strange leave of chance au-
 thority
 Reign or not reign. But all concerns
 me not:
 Rule as you may, be lord of that you
 can,
 I can contend not with your lords, or
 you,
 Their master-servant. Pardon me, I
 am weak,
 A feeble simple woman, without stay,
 And witless of your worth; yet I might
 fear
 Their policies were no good friends of
 yours,
 Could we see all. Men's hearts are
 manifold,
 Not made of glass like women's such
 as mine,
 At once transpicious and perceptible
 To eyes like yours that look their faults
 through; yet

Perchance you see more faults than lie
there, spots

That are not natural to us; or make
too much

Of our light thoughts and weakness;
yet, your pardon:

You have reason in it, being more wise
than we,

And stronger in your regency of soul;
It may be you do well to bear me hard,

And I do ill who think to counsel you;
'Tis no great matter; for in no great
while

My weakness will be medicine to itself,
And end as I do: no default of mine

But must by dying be curable; and
God knows

I little think to live.

Darnley. Why, have no fear;
You see I stand 'twixt you and all such
threat.

Queen. Nay, I see not; but though
you be my friend,

How far soever you stand out for me,
There is one threat that no man's help

in the world
Can bring to nothing: here it speaks

in me
Mortal; I know the word inevitable

That without breath or sound has called
me dead;

I would not plead against it.

Darnley. Nay, you dream;

You jest or dream.

Queen. I do not: I am dead.

What! have you slain in jest, or in a
dream

Have I seen death, and felt him in my
flesh,

Felt my blood turn, and my veins fill
with death,

And the pang pass and leave me as I
am,

Dead? for my state is pangless, and my
pain

Perished: I have no life to bring forth
pain,

Or painful fruit of life; I think in pity
God willed one stroke of sheer mor-
tality

Should kill all possible pain and fear
in me,

All after-chance of ill; I cannot die

Twice, and can live not with my dead
self here

Violently slain. I am sure I have no
child.

I would but pray, if I had breath to pray,
For mere shame's sake and pity's, I

might have
My women with me; and was not born

to want
What our most poor bare natural

womanhood
Seeks not in vain of meanest people:

more
I seek of no man's mercy.

Darnley. You shall have it;
But this is fear and shaken heart in

you —

I trust not very danger.

Queen. I tnat know

Must bear the peril and the sense alike,
And patiently can bear, so but I have

Hope of your heart made soft towards
me; sir,

Howe'er I have been untoward and
confident

In my blind state and sovereign folly,
now

God knows me if I have not need of
love

Who have so much of pardon.

Darnley. Is this sure,
Such instant and such perilous press of

time, —

Or but your thought it may be?

Queen. Nay, my thought!

Is it my thought I am stricken to my
death?

Is it my thought you have no pity of
me?

Is it my thought I had looked at other
time

For other joy of childbed, and such
pangs

As bring glad women honor? not this
death

That sunders me from fruit of mine own
years

And youth and comfort, and mere natu-
ral hope,

And love that looks on many a worse
than me?

Is it my thought that for small fault
of mine,

And little lack of love and duteousness,
I am brought to shame and mortal
chastisement?

Is it my thought love is not dead in me
For all this chastening? and my peni-
tence

Wherewith I weep on my least wrong-
doings past,
And faith wherewith I look for pardon
yet,

For grace of you—is all this but my
thought?

Darnley. By heaven, I will not have
you wronged of them.
You shall live safe and honorably.

Queen. My lord,
Who lives in such times honorably or
safe,
When change of will and violence
mutable

Makes all state loose and rootless?
Think you, men

Who have dipped their hands in this
red act with you

Will, as they wash them, so wash off
their hearts

The burning spot of raw malignity
And fire and hunger of ambition made
So proud and full of meat, so rank in
strength,

So grossly fed and fattened with fresh
blood?

Is it for love of your name more than
mine

These men that fought against my love
of you,

And made rebellious wars on my free
choice,

Smite now my very head and crown of
state

In this night's hot and present stroke?
Be sure

It is the throne, the name, the power in
us,

That here is stabbed and bleeds from
such a wound

As draws out life of you no less than
me

If you be part of majesty indeed.
Yea, howsoe'er you be now borne in
hand,

They will but use you as an axe to
smite,

A brand to set on fire the house of
state

And in the doing be burnt up of itself.
Why, do but think with now more
temperate blood

What are they that have helped you to
this deed?

What friends to you? what faith toward
royalty,

And what good-will and surety of sound
mind,

Have you found in them? or how put
in proof?

What bond have their loves given you
to confirm

Their hearts toward you stable? Nay,
if this

Be all my pledge for honor and safe
life,

They slide upon a slippery ground in-
deed.

Darnley. The pledge is mine, not
theirs: you have my word;

No warrant of their giving, but of me.
What ails you to go yet in fear of them?

Queen. Alas! I know not whom I
need yet fear.

What men were they who helped you
to this deed?

Yet it avails not me to know. I think
The fierce first root of violence was
not set

Of you nor of your uncles, though I
know

They of your mother's kinship love me
not;

But though their hearts, albeit one
blood with yours,

Be bitter toward me, yet being of your
blood

I would fain think them not so hard;
and yet

It was no gentle sight I had of them,
Nor usage; I can see their eyes burn
still,

And their brows meet against me.
Such a sight

Again might wind all suffering up in
me,

And give it full release.

Darnley. It was their plot;

That is, for love of me they felt the
offence

<p>Eat at their hearts. I did not set them on; But wrath and shame's suspicion for my sake Edged and envenomed; then your policies too, And injuries done the popular weal, the state So far mishandled, — this was all men's talk, Mine uncle's chiefly, Ruthven's, and his word Was hot in the ear of Maitland and Argyle, Showing the wrong done and the further fear, More wide in issue and large in likelihood Than all wrong done already; nay, and plain; You would have given the state up to strange hands, And for strange ends; no dreaming doubt of mine, But very vision, proof: they held it so; And, by my faith, I with them. <i>Queen.</i> Morton too? Was not his wit part of your wisdom? <i>Darnley.</i> Ay; Why, all heads highest, all subtlest, could not choose But be one judgment and one counsel here, In such a biting need; yea, common fools, Poor senseless knaves might see it. <i>Queen.</i> Yea, visibly. The sharpest wits and hands put armor on To go forth strong against me; little doubt But fools and ignorance and the common mouth, The very dust o' the street, the dross of man, Must needs take fire with blowing of such wind, And stir at such men's passage: their mere feet Moving would raise me up such enemies From the bare ground. Ruthven — you said his breath</p>	<p>Was first to heat men's hearing with strange words And set their hearts on edge; and at his touch The quick-eyed Maitland and loose-souled Argyle, Keen to catch fire or fear from other men's; And the full-counselled Morton — by my life (That's but a little oath now) I think strange To be at all alive, and have such men So sore unfriends and secret, and their wits So sharp to set upon so slight a thing. How grew this up amongst you? <i>Darnley.</i> Why, you see it; No need to set men on; their swords were made Of your own follies; yet have comfort; I, That was so little made of, so less worth, In your late judgment, will alone be guard And buckler of you; come what counsel may, It shall not hold against you with my will, And cannot work without. <i>Queen.</i> Nay, that were hard. I thank you; but what counsel will they take, Think you, which way to deal with me? <i>My soul</i> Is womanly distempered and distract With doubts of them: no fear of your good mind, Of your firm love and fruitful; but, alas! I am no strong man as you my guard, and ache With new faint fear of their fresh angers: then, This watch on me, my ways and rooms barred up, No help nor issue, shakes and sickens me With pangs for every stroke in the hour, that says I am so much more time prisoner. <i>Darnley.</i> For your guard,</p>
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It must be later taken off; the rest
 I will find mean of help for. They are
 now
 In council with your brother, new
 brought home
 With seal from me of pardon to reverse
 Your fresh and rash attainder, in my
 name
 Now cancelled and made strengthless;
 and I think
 There must three judgments be debated
 of,—
 Whether, for hurt done to the common
 state
 And treason to succession, you must
 bear
 Penance of death, or life's imprison-
 ment,
 Which fear not I will have them put in
 form,
 Nor see it pass upon you; the third
 mean
 Is for some season that you be in ward
 In Stirling Castle, till your warrant
 given
 And free consent to this late justice
 done,
 And to the new faith stablished in the
 realm
 By right and rule of law, religiously,
 And to mine own investiture as king.
 Now for no fear at all or doubt of them,
 But very love and good desire toward
 you,
 I will go plead your part, and take them
 sign
 Of seasonable submission; with which
 word
 I doubt not but to reconcile their
 thoughts,
 And bring their loves back bounden to
 your feet.
Queen. Neither do I doubt. Let
 them draw this bond,
 I will set hand to what they will of me.
 To seal you king needs now no grace
 of mine,
 Hardly my leave; and for their faith,
 it has
 Too firm a foot for my poor power to
 shake,
 Had I the will now molten in me strong
 As ere the fire of fierce necessity

Had made it soft and edgeless; for
 their deed,
 Say, if they hold my word of pardon
 worth
 More than mere scorn, I am bound to
 thank them, being
 Masters of me and of my wrath or will,
 And needing show me no such courtesy;
 And if it please them take mine oath
 and hand
 To sign them safe, and mark them from
 all charge
 Sackless and scatheless, let them take
 it; alas!
 I thought well they might rather take
 my life,
 And yet I think well they would take
 indeed
 But for your safeguard of me; would
 they not
 Slay me? nay, by your honor tell me—
 nay,
 I know they would, had I no guard in
 you,
 Slay me defenceless.
Darnley. Have no fear: I have
 sworn
 They shall not touch you roughly.
Queen. Swear again,
 That I may quite rest confident; and
 yet
 Swear not; I would not seem to hold
 you fast
 To your own peril; better were I dead
 Than you fell in their danger for my
 sake.
 Ah! and I know not, I may hardly think
 I have you surely on my side.
Darnley. By heaven,
 You shall want nothing of my help or
 love.
Queen. How had you heart to go so
 near my death?
Darnley. I had no mind to hurt you.
Queen. None? well, none—
 I will not think it; yet I was nigh dead.
 You saw my very death here at my
 breast
 Where your child is not yet—I did
 not think
 To feel instead there murder's iron lips
 For his soft suckling mouth.
Darnley. Come, think not of it.

Queen. I had not time to think of it indeed.

But I think now you will have hardly power

To match your will to save me, if their will

Shall yet be mortal to me: then I saw You had not power, or had not will; and now

I know not which you have yet.

Darnley. They shall find I have power enough and will to turn them.

Queen. Well — I lean, then, on your hand. If you were mine,

Though they were subtler and more strong in hate,

They should not hold me here in peril.

Darnley. How?

Queen. No matter, so their guard were less on me.

Darnley. You would take flight, then?

Queen. Ay, with you for wing

To lift me out of prison.

Darnley. Whither?

Queen. Nay, I am but the fool of your keen flattering wit,

Who let you see my little hope that lives

To see my some day sunnier: yet God knows

Without light of you it were lustreless.

I can look forth not, or heave up my hand,

But with your help to stay me.

Darnley. Surely no, As you stand now, you cannot; and I were

A faithless fool to mine own fortune, if I loosed you out of sight for wantonness,

Who have you now in hand: but for all this

It may be flight were no such unwise mean

To assure our free and mutual power on them,

And show them simply subject; as it is,

They have some show of hold on us which makes

Our reign and freedom questionable and slight:

I see some reason in it.

Queen. Why, do you think

That you being here their gaoler in their eye

Can be their king too, or not rather they

Lords both of gaol and warder? they will hold you

But as the minister of their power on me,

Of no more office than a doorkeeper Nor honor than their headsman; but

fled hence

You are very king indeed, by your own hand,

Lord of the life you give and majesty, By no man's furtherance and no grant

of theirs

Made pensioner and proxy for their reign

Who should bear rule and you the semblance, worn

As mask of all their faces, glove of hands,

And hollow trumpet blown of all their mouths,

But mine and all their free and sovereign king.

Darnley. Why, so I say; they must be borne in hand.

Look you, we must not set their fears on edge;

They shall suspect not: I will take them word,

And bring them to you for your bond.

Queen. Meantime,

I will but walk an hour here hand in hand

With my good brother; let me speak to him

While they shall draw the schedule.

Darnley. I will bid him

Attend you, and your women; but be sure

You take him not to counsel: he is wise,

And full of malice; let him not be part

Of our new mind.

Queen. He shall not.
Darnley. But you smile :
 What should he do to know it ?
Queen. He shall not know.
Darnley. Well, you shall see him,
 and they take off your guard ;
 I will make sure : but when and by
 what means
 Think you to fly ?
Queen. To-night.
Darnley. God help your wit !
 To-night ?
Queen. Before the change of watch ;
 I have said :
 Weak as I stand, and burdened, and
 soul-spent,
 I will be hence. Mistrust me not for
 strength ;
 My soul shall make my body like itself,
 A servant armed to wait upon my
 thought
 And page my purpose as its minister
 Till the end be held in hand. This
 guard removed,
 I will find ways out to win forth to-
 night,
 Fear not, and servants. Go, now to
 the lords
 With all submissive mild report of me,
 And bring them to receive my word
 and hand
 To confirmation of what bond they
 please
 For pardon and possession of their
 will ;
 And for your kingship—sir, assure
 yourself
 That in few hours it shall be seen and
 sure
 You shall need never seek their loves
 again,
 Or hands to help you to it, or tongues
 to cry,
 Nor be called king by will of any man,
 Nor lord by choice of any friend on
 earth.
Darnley. Nay, I would heed no
 voices.
Queen. And be sure
 You shall not build your power on
 loves of theirs,
 Nor live by their election. Go, and
 thrive :

Think how my faith and hope and love
 in you
 Find all their rest and stronghold, and
 on them
 Set up your trust and standard of your
 strength. *[Exit DARNLEY.]*
 So much is done ; go thou, then, first to
 death ;
 For from this hour I have thee.—Heart,
 lie still,
 Till I may make those mightier traitors
 mine
 That shall be swords for me to smite
 him with,
 And then be free as fire.
Enter MARY BEATON.
 Hast thou no news ?
Mary Beaton. The lord of Bothwell
 lies at secret ward
 To bear you forth of peril here by
 force ;
 He has gathered up his men beyond
 the walls
 To break this guard upon you when
 you will,
 If at your suit it shall not be with-
 drawn ;
 Here is his token brought me privily
 For your own hand.
Queen. No, in my heart it is,
 My love and lord, thy token ; this poor
 heart,
 That, ere mine ear is smitten with thy
 name,
 Hears it, and turns to springing fire.
 What thanks
 Would I not rather pay than these of
 words
 For this thy loving speed ? Yet send
 him these,
 And bid him, I would fain say come
 but wait
 Till I have tried my traitors ; if e'er
 tongue
 Win them to slack their hold on me
 to-night,
 We may speed surelier ; if their hands
 hold fast,
 Then let him smite and slay and set me
 free.
 I would have all their heads here in
 my lap,

Tell him, not one or two slain suddenly,
That their blood shed may seem not
spilt by chance,
Nor lost and won in hazard of affray,
But sacrificed by judgment, and their
names
Who would have made of royalty in
me
Ruin, and marred the general name of
king,
Shall with their lives be perfectly put
out,
Royally ruined; wherefore if I may
I will steal forth with subtle help of
words,
Not break their bonds with violence;
in which hope
Bid him watch close.

[Exit MARY BEATON.

And when his watch is done
It will be morning, and the sun shall
break
As fire for them that had their hour by
night
And light for wrath to see them and to
slay.

Re-enter ARTHUR ERSKINE, introducing
MURRAY.

Arthur Erskine. Madam, my lord of
Murray.

Queen. Ah! my brother,
Had you been here, they had not used
me thus.

Murray. I am sorry, madam, such
things should be done
As even the strain of sharp necessity
Can make but fierce and bitter.

Queen. Is this all?
Nay, it was necessary then and just,
Or I must seem and strive to think it
was,

If you say so. But in my present sight.
Now when a feather's or a flower's
weight borne

Might make life stoop within me, sense
break down,

All strong capacities of nature fail;
Now when the hardest heart with iron
bound

Might turn to very mercy for my sake,
Here in mine eye to do my friend to
death—

For howso'er ye hold him, yet being
dead

I will not say but he was friend of
mine

Who lies now dead and slaughtered,—
nay, by heaven,

I will not cast that name of friend away
Because the man my friend is slain for
me,—

I say, to kill him at my knee, to stain
An unborn child's brow with his mur-
dered blood,

To affray with sanguine hands, shake
with sheer blows,

The weak and holy warders of the
womb,

The reverence and remembrance of us
all

For that which bare us hidden before
birth

And after was called mother,—oh, this
deed,

This, though all law were cast out of
the world,

All grace forgotten,—this, you will not
say

But they did ill who did it. What! you
weep?

These tears are made of our dear
father's blood,

Who left in each of us such part of him
As must yearn each toward other, and
divide

At need their mutual suffering: I knew
well

I need not fear to find not in your heart
Some natural seed of comfort.

Murray. That I weep

I take no shame, to see you; but mine
eyes

Receive more comfort than their tears
can give

To see, for all this rash and ruthless
night,

Yet you stand up unwounded, and your
heart

Is left you to put spirit in your speech
Not like a sick man's. If you have no
hurt,

No hurt is done, though they did vio-
lently;

For this man's life was as a present
death

To the well-being and peace of all your
state,
Which, by the force of justice done on
him,
Stands now in surety. I would pray
you make
Your profit of your pain herein, being
wise,
As you well may; for this was not the
man
That you saw slain, but the man's
policy,
Stabbed through with all their daggers;
and you see
How it lies dead and outcast. I be-
seech you,
For your own love and honor of high
rule,
Set not your heart toward it to raise it
up
That men would bury, lest the grave-
yard reek
Of dead men's craft and strange men's
creeds brought back
Prove poison to you.
Queen. I will do what men will.
I must not die, then?
Murray. There are those would have
it
For scandal and offence cast on the
realm
By shame done to the popular common-
wealth
In majesty made shameful; as they
say
Through you it hath been, and your
dealings known
With this dead friend: some that would
leave you life
Spake of life spent in sharp imprison-
ment
Unto your death's day: but by mine
award
You are quit of either danger; you
must live
But under guard till you by word ap-
prove
This man's despatch for necessary and
just,
Submit yourself to call your husband
king,
And own the true faith rooted in this
realm

For lawful and for sovereign here of
rule.
So much you shall.
Queen. Nay, I will more than this.
I will seal now what you will have me
seal,
What bond soever: let them come to
me,
Who wrought this murderous matter
but last night,
That I may sign their pardon with my
tongue
Ere they can crave or threaten. Let
them come:
So shall my perfect purpose be more
plain
Freely in all things to submit myself—
I have your word already—to their
will:
Ay, even with all my new submissive
heart,
As else I cannot choose; for what am I,
That I should think much to submit
myself?
Murray. You shall do wisely to keep
faith with them,
And make your word your action's
measure: so
Shall hearts now loosened from you be
made fast,
And love reclaimed wait on you loyally
Through all your land's length. See,
the lords are come.
*Enter DARNLEY, MORTON, and RUTH-
VEN.*
Queen. Good morrow, sirs; ye gave
me no good night,
Yet are you welcome even as life or
death
Were welcome to me, coming with your
will:
For without love of my good lords my
life
Were scarce worth holding out against
their will;
But, if it please them I should die not
yet,
For their love's sake I give it welcome.
Sirs,
I have heard what terms ye lay upon
mine head,
And bow beneath them willingly, being
sure

It is but meet I should submit myself,
 It is but fit mere majesty bow down
 To take the burden by good men and
 wise
 Imposed upon it; nor shall this be
 hard;
 For what ye did so suddenly and swift,
 If there be power of pardon in me, here
 With as good heart even as ye did the
 deed
 Do I forgive it; nay, I should give you
 thanks
 That ye vouchsafe of me to be forgiven;
 For what am I among you? Let the
 bond
 Be drawn between us presently to sign,
 While for an hour's space I will walk
 and wait
 Here with my noble brother, hand in
 hand,
 And heart reposed on heart, eyes an-
 swering eyes,
 With pure plain faith: for what now in
 the world
 Should lies or dumb dissembling profit
 me,
 Though I were natural liar? as I do
 trust
 Ye shall not find me, but most faithful;
 yet,
 If I were falser than the foam of the
 sea,
 And wilfuller than wind, what should I
 do,
 Being yours, to mock you and myself,
 and lie
 Against mine own life? for ye see me,
 sirs,
 How I stand bare between you, without
 strength,
 At your mere mercy, with no friend on
 earth
 If ye will be mine unfriends; and I
 think
 To live but by your grace and leave,
 who might,
 If ye were minded, speak me out of life
 Or sign me dead with smiling; I were
 mad
 To play with lies, who feel your hands
 on me
 So heavy as they are, and have no hope
 Save to be pitied and believed of you.

I pray you, then, have faith in me, who
 live
 In your faith only, and, if it fail me here,
 Must die the lowliest death in all the
 world,
 And no man's hand to help me.
Darnley. She says truth:
 There is no hand.
Morton. Madam, though faith stand
 fast,
 Yet fear hath something here to say of
 you,
 And wisdom to remember. We must
 think
 That what is done in service of yourself
 You cannot hold good service when it
 comes
 So masked in blood, so vizarded like
 death,
 As this of ours doth; and that yet in
 time
 You may find mean to wreak your
 wrath on us
 For having strangely served you, and
 perforce
 Given desperation and the dangerous
 time
 So desperate a deliverance from de-
 spair.
 We have saved you in this service done
 the state,
 Who must have else been broken in the
 breach
 Of the state's order and the popular
 law,
 By this man living violently misused;
 But cannot hope yet for such thanks of
 you
 As even the deed deserves whose fierce
 despatch
 Has shaken you with thunder, and its
 flame
 Still makes your eyes blind to the good
 work done,
 And sharp need felt of it: so must this
 be,
 And so must we take heed lest, being
 yet blind,
 We give you scope and mean to hurt
 yourself.
Queen. I did not think the thing was
 yet alive
 That could fear me.

Darnley. Nay, look you, she says
right:

We have no room to fear her.

Queen. Lo, my lords,

How dangerous and how strong a thing
it is

That threatens here your state and
safety! see,

It is no less than woman, and unarmed,
Half dead, unfriended, hard on child-
bearing,

Naked of arms or means: it were not
wise

To leave unguarded, without spies or
swords

About her path, so great a danger; yea,
Wise men would rather fear her force
too much,

Than good men show compassion. Do
your wills:

I am well content to know you wise,
and so

To bear what hard or lighter weight ye
please:

How sore soever, God knows, I believe
It shall not long afflict me.

Murray. In my mind,

It now shall less distract the general
eye

With apprehension of strange times
and strife,

To see the ways again made clear, and
gates

Not crowded up with guard.

Darnley. Why, so I said.

Ruthven. So I say not. Bear with
me though I seem

less confident or free of heart than
men,

Whose minds are gentle as their names,
should be

In things of common care: what hurt
may come

By fault of us, we know not, but we
know

It is no private peril; if we err,
Not we nor ours must only ache for
it,

But the whole popular heart of this
great land

Must bleed and break for our false
friendship shown,

And confident remission of our cause

And very duty toward her, through
mere wish

To be called gentle toward her ene-
mies.

Queen. I am her enemy, then: where
lies my strength?

What field? what weapon? how shall
we make war,

Take truce and break it, with what
equal face

Stand brow to brow for battle? By
this hand,

I knew not yet how strong it was, nor
worth

How many hands of swordsmen; were
this true,

I might wax proud to be so terrible,
Seeing in such great men's eyes so great

a fear,

And only mine own fearful face therein
As in a mirror shadowed.

Darnley. 'Tis mere truth:

We should be shamed to seem in fear
of her.

Yea, made a mockery in men's eyes and
mouths

For base and blind misgiving.

Ruthven. You, my lords

And equals with me in the proof of
years,

In the age of counsel and experience
borne

Of common service done our natural
state,

Shall best pass judgment, if in hate or
fear

I speak for mine own ends or enmities
To turn your hearts from honor. For

the queen,

As she shall be toward God, so I toward
her

Would be fast friend and servant; but
wherein

She is not friend with heaven nor with
the state,

I were no friend to serve her, nor to say
There were no danger and no sin to

serve.

Ye must all think I think not to live
long;

And being so signed of sickness for my
grave

With such a mortal seal, I speak alive

As one being dead that speaketh : if ye
lose

The grace of God here won by your
own hands,

The power ye have to serve him, and
the effect

Of his good hour, through negligence
of will,

Or pride or pity, ye shall see the state
Break from your hands, and, for one
devil cast out,

Seven entered in its body. Sirs, take
heed :

The least thing lightly overlooked or
done

May undo all things wrought. Keep
fast your guards ;

By the king's counsel if they be with-
drawn,

Upon his head that bade them go shall
rest

What bloodshed ever follows : yet in
time

Think nothing weak that is not with us ;
each

May have some sting or weapon of it-
self

That till sloth feel it sees not.

Queen. A wise rule :

So should the wary wolf pen up the
lambs,

The falcon set good guard upon the
wren,

For fear of teeth or talons.

Murray. We will give
To the king's hand the bond for yours
to sign :

Meantime all ease and reverence shall
you have,

And freedom for your household folk to
serve

As best your need may bid them.

Queen. Sirs, farewell.

I will not pray you do but what ye will,
Which shall seem wisely to me. — Let
me have

Word of their instant sentence. [*Aside
to DARNLEY.*]

Darnley (aside). With all speed.

[*Exit DARNLEY, MURRAY, MORTON,
and RUTHVEN.*]

Queen. Where are my servants
Standen and Traquair ?

Arthur Erskine. At hand to serve
your highness.

Queen. Ah, to serve !

My highness is brought low, too low to
claim

Service of men ; if I may find but love
Or only pity of any, this shall be

All utmost service I desire of them.

I have but my sorrows to my subjects
left,

And these rebellious ; yet I keep what
state

And rule I may upon them. Tell those
twain

I pray their patience lend me but the
time

To hear what I would have them, and
to choose

If they will do it for pity.

Arthur Erskine. Think them here,
And your will done already. [*Exit.*]

Queen. Yea, my will !

What knowest thou may my will be ?
By this light,

I feel a heat and hurry of the heart
That burns like joy ; my blood is light
and quick,

And my breath comes triumphantly as
his

That has long labored for a moun-
tainous goal,

And sets fast foot on the utmost cliff
of all.

If ere the race be run my spirit be glad,
What when it puts the palm of peril
on,

And breathes clear air, and conquers ?
Nay, I think

The doubt itself and danger are as food
To strengthen and bright wine to
quicken me,

And lift my heart up higher than my
need,

Though that be high upon me.

*Re-enter ERSKINE with TRAUQUAIR
and STANDEN.*

Now, my friends,
Ye come unlike to courtiers, come to
serve

Me most unlike a queen : shall I think
yet

I have some poor part in your memories
safe,

And you some care of what I was, and
 thought
 How I fare now? Shall I take up my
 hope,
 That was cast down into the pit of
 death,
 To keep the name God gave me, and
 the seal
 That signs me royal, by your loves and
 faiths
 Recrowned and reinstated? Say but no,
 Or say but naught, this hope of mine
 and heart
 Are things as dead as yesterday: my
 cause
 Lies in your lips, to comfort or con-
 found,
 As ye see reason. Yet, as power is
 yours,
 So let remembrance in you be for light
 To see the face of the time by; so let
 faith,
 Let noble pity and love be part of you,
 To make you mindful what a cause it is
 That ye must put in judgment, and
 what life
 For fame or shame to you through all
 time born
 Ensues upon your sentence; for ye
 choose
 If ye will match my dangers with your
 faiths,
 And help me helpless with your hearts,
 who lie
 By grief and fear made heartless; or
 lend hand
 To make my weakness weaker, and
 break down
 My broken wall of sovereignty; which
 now
 We wot were no sore labor.
Standen. Let him die
 As heartless toward the grace of God,
 who hath
 No heart in him to give its blood for
 yours!
Traquair. So say we all your ser-
 vants.
Queen. Did I know it?
 Methinks I knew, when I bade send for
 you,
 Ye should so say. Ah, friends! I had
 no fear

But I should find me friends in this
 fierce world,
 Or I had died unfriended. Shall I
 thank you
 For being the true men and the kind
 ye are,
 Or take your service thankless, since I
 thought
 Ye could not else, being young and of
 your kinds,
 But needs must be my help? ye have
 not hearts
 To strike, but at men weaponed; ye
 would not
 Lay hard hand on a woman weak with
 child,
 A sick sad woman that was no man's
 queen
 Of all that stood against her; yet her son,
 The unborn thing that pleads again
 with you
 As it could plead not with them, this
 dumb voice,
 This sightless life and sinless, was their
 king's,
 If ever they would let it come to life.
 Lo, here their aim was; here the weap-
 ons went,
 That should have stabbed to death the
 race of kings,
 And cut their stem down to the root;
 here, here
 The pistol's mouth that bruised my
 breast, the hand
 That struck athwart my shoulder, found
 their mark,
 Made here their point to shoot at; in
 my womb
 By them the bud of empire should have
 died,
 That yet by you may live, and yet give
 thanks
 For flower and fruit to them that saved
 the seed.
Standen. They shall die first.
Traquair. Command us what next
 way
 There is to serve you: though the way
 were fire,
 We would be through it.
Queen. To-night, then, at first watch
 I purpose with the man's help—nay,
 what name

Shall his be now? king, husband, or,
 God help,
 King's father?— with the man that you
 called king
 As I called husband, to win forth of
 bonds
 By the close covered passage under-
 ground
 That by strange turns and strait blind
 working ways
 Winds up into the sovereign cemetery
 Whose dust is of my fathers; there-
 without
 Wait you with horse; and when you see
 us rise
 Out of the hollow earth among the
 dead,
 Be ready to receive and bear us thence.
 Some two hours' haste will speed us to
 Dunbar,
 Where friends lie close, and whence
 with sudden strength
 I trust to turn on these good lords
 again.
 Do this for such poor love's sake as
 your queen's,
 And if there be thanks worthy in the
 world,
 Them shall she give; not silver, sirs,
 nor gold,
 Nor the coined guerdon that is cast on
 churls
 To coin them into service; but a heart,
 If not worth love, yet loving, and a
 faith
 That will die last of all that dies in me,
 And last of all remembrances foregone
 Let your names go. God speed you,
 and farewell.

SCENE II.— RUINS OF THE ABBEY OF
 HOLYROOD.

Enter ARTHUR ERSKINE, TRAQUAIR,
 and STANDEN.

Standen. It must be time; the moon
 is sick and slow

That should by this be higher.

Arthur Erskine. It is your eye
 Whose sight is slow as sickness; for
 the moon

Is seasonable and full: see where it
 burns

Between the bare boughs and the
 broken tombs

Like a white flower whose leaves were
 fire: the night

Is deep and sharp wherein it hangs,
 and heaven

Gives not the wind a cloud to carry,
 nor

Fails one faint star of all that fill their
 count

To lend our flight its comfort; we shall
 have

Good time of heaven and earth.

Traquair. How shall the steeds

Be shared among us?

Arthur Erskine. If she keep her
 mind,

My English gelding best shall bear the
 queen,

And him the Naples courser. Hark!
 they come.

Standen. It was a word said of the
 wind to hear

What earth or death would answer.
 These dead stones

Are full of hollow noises, though the
 vault

Give tongue to no man's footfall: when
 they come,

It will speak louder. Lo, how straight
 that star

Stands over where her face must break
 from earth

As it hath broken! it was not there
 before,

But ere she rise is risen. I would not
 give

The third part of this night between us
 shared

For all the days that happiest men
 may live,

Though I should die by morning.

Traquair. Till she come,

I cannot choose but with my fears take
 thought,

Though all be after her sweet manner
 done

And by her wise direction, what strange
 ways

And what foul peril with so faint a
 guard

Must of so tender feet be overpast

Ere she win to us.

Arthur Erskine. All these with laughing lips
 Shall she pass through; the strength
 and spring of soul
 That set her on this danger will sustain
 Those feet till all her will and way be
 won.
 Her spirit is to her body as a staff,
 And her bright fiery heart the travel-
 ler's lamp
 That makes all shadow clear as its own
 light.
*Enter from the vaults the QUEEN and
 DARNLEY.*
Queen. Here come the wind and stars
 at once on us;
 How good is this good air of that full
 heaven
 That drives the fume back of the sepul-
 chres,
 And blows the grave away! Have no
 more fear;
 These are no dead men.
Darnley. Nay, I fear no dead;
 Nothing I fear, of quick or dead, but
 God.
 Shall I not go before you?
Queen. Not a foot.
 See you, my friends, what valiant hearts
 are here,
 My lord's and mine, who hardly have
 crept forth,
 In God's fear only, through the charnel-
 house,
 Among the bones and skulls of ancient
 kings
 That thought not shame to stand for
 stumbling-stones
 In their poor daughter's way, whose
 heart had failed,
 But that his hardier heart held up her
 feet,
 Who even if winds blew did not shrink
 nor shake
 For fear of aught but God. The night
 is kind,
 And these March blasts make merry
 with the moon
 That laughs on our free flight. Where
 stand your steeds?
Arthur Erskine. Madam, hard by in
 shadow of the stones;
 Please you, this way.

Queen. I will to horse with you.
Darnley. No, but with me.
Queen. It is not my good will.
 Ride you alone, and safer. — Friend,
 your arm.

SCENE III. — MURRAY'S LODGING IN
 HOLYROOD.

*Enter MURRAY, MORTON, and
 RUTHVEN.*

Morton. There is no present help:
 the violent speed
 Of these fierce days has run our chances
 down.
 It is found certain she comes back to-
 day;
 Soon as their flight drew bridle at
 Dunbar,
 Yet hot from horse, she sends for
 Bothwell in,
 With all his border thievery, red-foot
 knaves,
 The hardest hinds of Liddesdale;
 next him
 His new bride's brother, Huntley, more
 in care
 To win the land back than revenge the
 blood
 His father lost for treason; after these
 Caithness with Athol, and the queen's
 chief strengths,
 The earl marshal and the archbishop;
 in few days
 Eight thousand swords to wait on that
 sweet hand
 Was worth so little manhood; then
 Argyle,
 Who should have been a sea-wall on
 our side
 Against the foam of all their faction,
 he,
 Struck to the heart with spite and sharp
 despair
 Through proof late made of English
 faith, — as you,
 My lord of Murray, felt it when ye
 twain
 Sought help, and found false heart
 there, — casts himself
 Over upon her side; with him two more
 Her last year's rebels, Rothes and Glen-
 cairn,

And pardon sealed for all that rose with them	It was well done; what else was done, and ill,
Who were not of our counsel in this death.	We must now bear the stroke of, and devise
Thus fare we without help or hope of these,	Some healing mean in season. This is sure,
And from the castle here of Edinburgh	That faith or friendship shall have no long life
The hot Lord Erskine arms in our offence	Where friendship is ingrafted on breach of faith;
His mounted guns, making the queen more strong	But shame, despite, division, and distrust
Than had her flight won first its darkling walls,	Shall eat the heart out of their amity,
And for a free camp in the general field	And hate unreconcile their heartless hands
Set up her strength within the fortress here —	Whom envious hope made fast, or cunning fear.
Which serves her now for outwork, while behind	This cannot be but nigh; and ye that live
The whole force raised comes trooping to her hand.	Shall see more sure for this blind hour's default,
In this deep strait that our own hands have dug	And hold more fast, and watch more heedfully,
And our own follies channelled, to let in	The new chance given, for this chance cast away.
Storm on our sails and shipwreck on our hopes,	I shall not see it, how near soe'er; and yet
My counsel is that whoso may stand fast	The day that I shall die in banishment
Should here in harbor bide his better day,	Is not much nigher than must their doom's day be
And we make land who may not: you, my lord,	Whose trust is in the triumph of their hour.
As by James Melville she solicits you,	Mine is now hard on end; but yours shall last,
May honorably assure your peace with her,	I doubt not, till its service be all done,
Being speckless in her sight of this man's blood;	And comfort given our people. Take the Lairds
We that dipped open hand in it must hence,	Grange and Pittarrow with you to the queen.
And watch the way of the wind and set of storm	Ye shall find peace and opportunity
Till the sea sink again.	With present welcome as for proffered love;
<i>Ruthven.</i> Sir, so say I;	Make swift agreement with her; this shall be
You serve not us a whit nor change our chance	The surest staff that hope may take in hand.
By tarrying on our side. Let no man fly	Farewell.
For our deed's sake, but we that made our deed	<i>Murray.</i> I would not say it, if ye not knew
The witness for us not to be gainsaid	My faith departs not with me from your side,
By foe of ours or friend we have on earth.	Nor leaves the heart's bond broken of our loves;

But = this trust, though loath, I take
farewell,

To give you welcome ere the year be
dead.

Rutven. Me shall you not, nor see
my face again,

Who ere the year die must be dead;
mine eyes

Shall see the land no more that gave
them light,

But fade among strange faces; yet, if
ought

I have served her, I should less be loath
to leave

This earth God made my mother.

Murray. Then farewell,
As should his heart who fares in such
wise forth

To take death's hand in exile. I must
fare,

Ill now or well I know not; but I deem
I have as much as you of banishment,

Who bear about me but the thought of
yours.

SCENE IV. — HOLYROOD.

The QUEEN and SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Queen. Am I come back to be con-
trolled again,

And of men meaner? must I hold my
peace

Or set my face to please him? Nay,
you see

How much miscounselled is he, strayed
how far

From all men's hope and honor, and to
me

How strange and thankless, whom in
self-despite

You will me yet to foster: I would live
Rather the thrall of any hind on earth.

Melville. I would but have your wis-
dom hide somewhat

The sharpness of your spirit, whose
edge of wrath

There is no man but now sees mani-
fest;

As there is none who knows him that
hath cause

To love or honor; yet great pity it is
To see what nobler natural mind he
had,

And the first goodness in him so put
out

By cursed counsel of his mother's kin,
The bastard Douglas, and such ill
friends else

As most are unfriends: but this fire in
you

Who chose him, being so young, of
your own will,

Against the mind of many, for your
iord,

Shall rather burn yourself than purge
his mood,

And the open passion of your heart and
hate

Hearten in him the hate he bears not
you,

But them that part you from him.
Twice, you know, —

Or now my tongue were less for love's
sake bold, —

Twice hath it pleased your highness
charge me speak

When time or need might seem for
counsel: then

That thus you charged me, now such
need is come,

Forgive that I forget not.

Queen. I might well,
Did you forget, forgive not; but I know
Your love forgot yet never any charge

That faith to me laid on it; though I
think

I never bade you counsel me to bear
More than a queen might worthily, nor
sought

To be advised against all natural will,
That with mine honor now is joined to
speak

And bid me bear no more with him,
since both

Take part against my patience. For
his hate,

Henceforth shall men more covet it
than fear;

My foot is on its head, that even to-
day

Shall yield its last poor power of poison
up,

And live to no man's danger till it die.

Enter DARNLEY and MURRAY.
Welcome, dear brother and my worthy
lord,

Who shall this day by your own word
be clear

In all men's eyes that had ill thoughts
of you.

Brother, to-day my lord shall purge
himself,

By present oath before our councillors,
Of any part in David's murdered blood,
And stand as honorable in sight of all
Whose thought so wronged him as in
mine he doth

Who ever held him such as they shall
now.

Murray. Must he swear this?

Darnley. Who says I shall not swear?

Queen. He has given his faith to
swear so much to-day,

And who so shameless or so bold alive
As dare doubt that?

Murray. Not I: in God's name, no;
No more than any other.

Darnley. Nay then, well:

I am not angry.

Queen. 'Tis the noblest mood

That takes least hold on anger those
faint hearts

That hold least fire are fain to show it
first;

The man that knows himself most hon-
orable

Fears least or doubts if others hold
him so;

But he that has small honor in himself
Is quick to doubt what men may deem
of him,

And thence most swift in anger as in
fear

Of men's imagined judgments; praised
be God,

Our lord is none such. Is the deed not
drawn

That gives into our servant Bothwell's
hand

The forfeit lands of Maitland for his
own

That by his former fault stand for-
feited?

Murray. Is it your purpose he shall
have those lands?

Queen. It is my very purpose.

Murray. I grieve at it.

Queen. Grieve or be glad, it stands
my purpose yet.

We should be gone to meet our coun-
cillors;

My heart thinks long till it shall know
my lord

Held of the world as noble as of me.

Darnley. It is not time.

Queen. No, but much more than time.
Come with me, brother

[*Exeunt* QUEEN and MURRAY.]

Melville. I am sorry for your grace.

Darnley. You must not think I know
not all this while

That she doth mock me.

Melville. Nay, her mood may change.

Darnley. Never for me. I had been
much better dead

Than cast off thus, who cast mine own
friends off

And knew not for whose sake. She
hath slain the men

Who kept that night the gates while he
was slain;

I would she had rather taken too my
blood

Than put my life to shame: yet I may
live

To put that off upon her; had I friends,
Shame should go back from me to her,
who thinks

To lay it on her wedded lord, and
laugh;

As I may one day laugh yet. Hear
you news

Of Morton and mine uncle?

Melville. They are fled;

I hear but this, not whither.

Darnley. As they brewed,

So let them drink; the hands were
none of mine

That mixed that cup to them; so much
I swear,

And may so much with honor. Yet
would God

I had not chosen to lose their loves for
hers,

And found so cold her favor! Scarce
escaped,

Scarce out of bonds, half breathless
yet with flight,

No mind was in her of my help, my
love,

My hand that brake her prison: for all
this,

My kin forsaken, mine own wrongs
 and griefs
 Forgotten, mine own head imperiled,
 mine
 For hers that I delivered, and perchance
 To leave within their danger had done
 well,
 No thought or thanks I get of her; and
 these
 That, had I stood by them, might stand
 by me
 When I shall need, may mock me for
 her fool,
 And curse me for their traitor. Yet I
 think,
 Were I once clear of her as now of
 these,
 Please God, to make mine own strength
 by myself,
 Being both ways free; I know not well
 yet how,
 But I will take mine own part yet, or
 die. [Exeunt.]

SCENE V.—A STREET.

Enter TWO BURGESSES.

First Burgess. What is this news
 that flies so in the dark
 Like a night-bird whereof we know it
 is,
 But of what wing we know not?
Second Burgess. This that comes
 From the exiled lords in England, to
 make bare
 The face of Darnley's falsehood, with
 what lips
 He swore his deed away, and damned
 himself?
 They had no sooner knowledge of such
 shame,
 Than word was sent of him through all
 the land,
 Large witness of his full complicity
 And conscience with them of the work
 to be
 For which they groan in barren banish-
 ment,
 While he crawls here before the scorn-
 ful queen,
 And has betrayed the blood of his
 allies
 To the axe's edge of unjust judgment.

First Burgess. One

By treason of his tongue already slain
 Now speaks of him with breathless
 mouth to God;
 And Martindale and two more lie under
 doom
 Through but his witness: yet for all
 this shame
 It seems he has won small guerdon
 save the shame,
 But hath his treason for his treason's fee;
 And this more comfort, to behold the
 man
 That by his lips, and nobler hands than
 his,
 Was done to righteous death, and
 thrust in earth
 Before the main door of this Abbey
 church,
 Unearthed again, and nobly re-interred
 Hard by the grave's edge of Queen
 Magdalen,
 That men may judge how near he grew
 alive
 To the queen's side yet living; where
 instead
 A worthier stay now in her brother
 stands
 For her false lord to look upon and
 loathe
 No less than David, and much more
 to fear,
 Whom with that David he laid trains
 to slay
 Aforetime, and again made vaunt but
 now
 In the queen's sight to slay him; or so
 herself
 Gave word to the earl, and willed him
 make demand
 Of the king's own false fearful mouth;
 but he,
 Whom thus perchance she sought to
 make the sword
 To pierce her husband, modestly be-
 spake
 Before her face this caitiff like a friend,
 And was put off with faint excuse; and
 yet,
 Heart-wrung to see him stand, or any
 man,
 Fast in her favor, like one sick with
 grief

The king flies forth to Glasgow, where
 apart
 His father's head is hidden; and there
 as here
 He sits not in men's sight now royally,
 But with some six or eight goes up and
 down
 Even where he lists, and none takes
 note of him;
 While the miscounselled queen, grown
 high in mind,
 Holds privy commerce with the brood
 o' the Pope
 Whose plots corrupt the northward
 English air,
 And with the murderous Irish, to put
 out
 The live light of our God from sea
 to sea
 With insurrection of the fires of hell
 And smoke of slaughter; meantime she
 reclaims
 Of the English queen, for prisoners to
 her hand,
 The death-doomed lords in exile; and
 men say
 They find scant countenance of the
 southern court;
 Yet they think not she will deliver them.
Second Burgess. One is there hath
 found sure deliverance;
 No chain of man's can mark him pris-
 oner more,
 Nor whence he rests can any banish
 him;
 Ruthven is dead.
First Burgess. God hath his friend,
 then, safe;
 For God's friend he was ever; and hath
 died
 Most fortunately, seeing not what we
 live
 Too soon to see.
Second Burgess. He was a nobler man
 Than his own name was noble: no
 Scot born
 More true to the old love of his natural
 land,
 Nor stouter-hearted on the gospel side
 Of all that stood to serve it. Yet have
 these
 As valiant servants; Morton, though
 cast out,

Lives secret yet in England, whence the
 queen
 Dares not, I think, for shame's sake,
 yield him up
 To this queen's bloody judgment, or
 for fear
 And hostile heart she will not. We
 shall know
 Shortly what upshot God will bring of
 all;
 Whate'er this be, there will be none
 again
 That shall do Darnley good.
First Burgess. I saw him swear
 That day before the council; he was pale
 As one half drunken, stammering as in
 wrath,
 With insolent forehead and irresolute
 eyes,
 Between false fear and shameful hardi-
 hood,
 With frontless face that lied against it-
 self,
 And trembling lips that were not yet
 abashed
 For all their trembling.
Second Burgess. Ay, good cause was
 there
 To shake him to the soul, having cast
 off
 Friendship and faith of good men, yet
 being still
 Signed with their enemies' blood too
 plain and broad
 To gain the good-will of unrighteous-
 ness.
 When his day comes that men are
 weary of him,
 God shall strike home.
First Burgess. Then should that stroke
 be swift;
 For evil and good alike are weary of
 him.

SCENE VI.—CASTLE OF ALLOA.

MURRAY and DARNLEY.

Darnley. Shall I not see her? but if
 I see her not
 I will be wroken of you that shut me
 out,
 By God I will. What! are ye not com-
 bined,

You, my false-blooded brother, demi-prince,
 And Bothwell, and the trustless fool
 Argyle,
 With her to unmake me? I shall foil
 you though,
 Yea, were all three made each a triple
 man
 With thrice your heart and wit.
Murray. You strike too high,
 And shear but air in sunder: there's
 none yet
 That wills you so much evil as yourself,
 Would you but think it. Turn your
 wrath on me,
 It cannot wound or fright out of its
 peace
 A soul that answers not your hate, nor
 works
 By night or light against you.
Darnley. Swear me that,
 And if a devil there be, I am rid of you
 Whom he will gripe at once, and hale to
 hell.
 You took not word to Melville from
 my wife,
 Of warning with rebuke for his past
 pains
 To reconcile us, and with charge to be
 No more familiar with me for her
 sake;
 You were not of her counsel to lie in
 At Stirling, whence she fled from sight
 of me,
 Who following hither was again cast
 off,
 And till our child was born in Edin-
 burgh
 Might scarce have sight of her, and
 may not now
 When, scarce a month delivered, she
 comes back
 To take by sea and land her pleasure
 here
 Of hunt or sail among the firths and
 hills
 In such fair fellowship as casts out
 mine.
 It was not you that knew this, and
 approved:
 I pray you, swear it.
Murray. You are lesser than a child,
 That, being as simple, yet by innocence

Exceeds you naturally. What cause
 have I
 Or power to wrong you? what good
 thing of yours
 Should I desire to strip from you, and
 wear,
 What gold or grace to gird myself
 withal,
 And stand up clad in thievish orna-
 ment
 To take your place thrust out? Con-
 spiracy
 Should have some gain for warrant of
 itself,
 With vantage of some purpose; none
 lays wait
 To slay or steal save what may profit
 him;
 So sit you safe enough.
Darnley. I shall not see her?
Murray. If you will be well coun-
 selled, no: her mood
 Is hard and keener since your child
 was born,
 And she, new-risen from childbed,
 hither came
 To taste the savor and sweetness of the
 sea,
 I think, with no mind you should follow
 her;
 Nor am myself, howbeit you hold me
 hers,
 And of one counsel to put down your
 hopes,
 More near her favor; one man's eye
 alone
 Sees her face favorable, one only ear
 Hears her speak soft; if he be friend
 of mine,
 You know as I know.
Darnley. Why, ye are reconciled;
 I have heard what care she had to
 appease both parts,
 When you before her face had braved
 him, saying,
 Ere he reft Maitland's forfeit land and
 state
 Some score as honorable as he should
 die,
 And she had cast herself across your
 wrath
 With reconciling passion; ay, my
 lord,

Take note we are not so dull of ear or
 brain
 But we hear word of you, and under-
 stand
 The traitors that ye all are, all, to
 me,
 The false heart and the lying lips that
 serve
 The murderous meaning of your will,
 and hers
 The first and worst. What! will ye
 have my life?
 Is it my helpless blood that she would
 take
 To serve for christening-water to her
 child,
 And for the font no gift of English
 gold
 Though bright and hollow and void as
 English love,
 But the strait coffin, the vile shell of
 death,
 That hides and bears me graveward?
 but I live,
 To save myself and to revenge I live,
 And will not die for all you.
Enter the QUEEN and BOTHWELL.
Queen. What is this
 That makes such wrathful or such wo-
 ful war
 Even on our ears, and here? We bade
 you not
 Come brawl before us like a groom,
 and break
 Our breath of peace with cries of con-
 tumely.
 Here is not room enough for rioters'
 threats
 To ring through and return; in Edin-
 burgh
 You have leave to brawl and wail and
 swear and cry,
 Feed where you list, and love; here I
 would rest,
 With thus much leave yet by your
 gracious grant,
 That I may somehow sit apart, and
 think
 What man I have to husband.
Darnley. I will go:
 I would I had not come between your
 eyes
 Nor now nor ever.

Queen. Then they had never learnt
 What makes or makes not man worth
 looking on.
Darnley. Am I not worth your eye?
Queen. I pray, go back:
 I would not say what you are worth or
 no.
Darnley. I am yet worth two bas-
 tards; and this man,
 If he shall do me less than right, by
 heaven,
 Shall wear the proof upon him.
Murray. Sir, your words
 Are as swords drawn of drunkards'
 hands, which first
 Feel their edge bite; me can they make
 not shrink,
 You they may pierce, and slay your
 own good name,
 If any man be that gives ear to you.
Darnley. You will not fight with me?
Queen. What! in our face?
 Hath fear gone after shame?
Murray. Let him pass hence:
 He hath said truth once; we shall not
 fight.
Queen. I charge you
 Make straight atonement; else, though
 shame be dead,
 I will find means to raise up fear alive.
Darnley. Nay, I spake hot and
 hastily: my lord,
 You know I bear no bitter heart toward
 you:
 I am more of quick tongue than of evil
 will.
Murray. Sir, so I hold you.
Darnley. So you do but right.
 Nor will I stay to chafe your majesty,
 That has all power to bid me to and
 fro
 Who yet was called your lord once of
 the priest,
 And am no lord, but servant. [*Exit.*
Queen. Said you, once?
 Not once, but twice, he hath spoken
 truth to-day.
 Yet sits it strange upon his lips.
Murray. I would
 He had come not hither, or you not
 bidden him back.
Queen. What! should he stay? Fair
 brother, would you well,

I had rather touch in the dark a serpent's flesh,
 And with its body and breath confound mine own,
 Than with his breath and body. Never more,
 By Mary Virgin, while these limbs are mine
 And these my living lips, never will I
 Pollute myself with him; by kiss nor touch
 Shall ever he defile me. Nay, too, see,
 (You have not seen) what privacies he hath
 With what strange friends; here have I to my hand
 Letters of his to Philip and the Pope,
 That they should know I am slacker toward the faith
 Than Rome would have me, or Spain; he swears I am cold,
 I have cast off care (God wot) to serve the Church,
 And he it is, my lord, being strong in faith,
 Expounds mine unfaith to them.
Bothwell. Hath he sworn
 To sleep for their sakes in a naked grave?
 If this were blown among the popular folk,
 Scant time there were to sew his shroud,
 I ween,
 Ere earth were shed upon him.
Murray. Ay, but, sir,
 They must not know it; it were not well they knew;
 Nor shall it be put forth among them.
Bothwell. No!
 It shall not?
Murray. By my will it shall not be.
Bothwell. His will! and shall not! Is it queen, or king,
 That holds the rod of rule in Scotland here?
 Madam, what says your sometime majesty
 Of such a kingly will? since, for your own,
 It has no power, it shall not fight with his,
 Shall not have way, nor shall not be at all,
 Except it swim with his will.

Murray. This is naught.
Bothwell. Yea truly, naught shall be this will of yours,—
 This potent will that shall not tread us down;
 Yea, what you will or will not, all is naught,
 Naught as your name, or title to bear rule
 Within the realm possessed more royally.
Murray. 'Tis not a score as big-voiced men as this
 Shall make me weak with wagging of their tongues,
 That I should loose what lies into my hand.
 Madam, what faith I bear you and goodwill,
 If that you know not, let the time and proof,
 Not mine own lips, be witness: in this realm
 I have some power to serve you, by no craft
 Unjustly purchased nor by force of hand
 Won masterfully; and for God's love and yours
 That which I may I will do to keep fair
 In the open eye of all men your good name
 And power, which if that name be blown against
 With windy whispers of ill-minded folk,
 Or such as see your marriage-bed lie cold,
 And know not wherefore, dies out of your hand,
 And is no more forever. Therefore is it
 I would not the worst cause of strife you have
 Were opened to the people: for himself,
 You know if ever love between us were
 Since first I fell under your stroke of wrath
 For his sole sake, whose match then made with you
 I would betimes have broken, but being made
 Would not now see rent shamefully in twain
 That men should speak you wrong.

Queen. You are honorable;
 But yet the whole worst cause you know
 not of,—
 That even his father Lennox writes me
 here
 Letters to put the charge thereof away,
 And clear himself of fellowship there-
 in,
 Assuring his own honesty, albeit
 His word is worthless with his son my
 lord,
 And his name held not as a father's
 name.
 This letter will I lay before the lords,
 That they may see what manner of
 cause he hath
 To plead against us with what likeli-
 hood,
 When his own father shall forswear
 his cause.
 I am assured he hath set his lewd light
 mind,—
 Out of what fear I know not, or what
 shame,—
 To flee forth of the kingdom, and take
 ship
 For the islands westward of that south-
 ern cape
 Where the out-thrust heel of England
 cleaves the sea;
 But God knows how to live there, if by
 spoil
 Or what base mean of life: only thus
 much
 In parley with the French ambassador
 He hath avowed, and wept to tell of
 wrongs
 That, as he swears, have driven him
 down to this.
Murray. He is a fool, and vile: yet
 let not him
 Be the more dangerous to you even for
 this,
 That he is vile and foolish; there
 should be
 Wise means to curb and chain the fool
 in him
 Without the scandal of the full-mouthed
 world.
Queen. Such have I sought; and pres-
 ently I think
 To have him brought again in Edin-
 burgh

Before the lords in council, even those
 men
 Who stood in arms against him with
 yourself
 When first there grew debate upon our
 match
 (Which I could pray now with too tardy
 tongue
 That God had given you force to break
 indeed),
 And were of counsel with him afterward
 In David's bloodshed, and betrayed of
 him
 Into mine hand again for perfect fear,
 Fear and false heart; even before these,
 I say,
 Whose threefold memory of him so
 must knit
 Their hearts to his, there shall he plead,
 and say
 If he have aught against me blame-
 worthy,
 Or what he would: so shall he be dis-
 played,
 And we in the eyes of all men justified
 That simply deal with him and honor-
 ably,
 Not as by cunning or imperious hand,
 But plain as with an equal.
Bothwell. By my head,
 Your counsel, madam, is more than
 man's poor wit.
Murray. It may do well: would all
 were well indeed!
 I see no clearer way than this of yours
 Nor of more peaceful promise. I will
 go
 To bid my friends together of the lords
 Who will be counselled of me, and to
 show
 Your purpose righteous: so I take my
 leave.
 [Exit.
Queen. Is not that light red oversea?
Bothwell. Blood-red.
Queen. The wind has fallen: but
 there the clouds come up.
 We shall not sail to-day.
Bothwell. No: here will be
 No woman's weather.
Queen. Yet I had in mind
 Either to sail or drive the deer to-day.
 I fear not so much rainfall or sea-drift

That I should care to house and hide
my head.

I never loved the windless weather, nor
The dead face of the water in the sun:
I had rather the live wave leapt under me,
And fits of foam struck light on the
dark air,

And the sea's kiss were keen upon my
lip
And bold as love's and bitter; then my
soul

Is a wave too that springs against the
light,

And beats and bursts with one great
strain of joy

As the sea breaking. You said well;
this light

Is like shed blood spilt here by drops
and there,

That overflows the red brims of the
cloud,

And stains the moving water: yet the
waves

Pass, and the spilt light of the broken
sun

Rests not upon them but a minute's
space;

No longer should a deed, methinks,
once done,

Endure upon the life of memory
To stain the days thereafter with re-
morse,

And mar the better seasons.

Bothwell. So think I.

Queen. If I were man, I would be
man like you.

Bothwell. What then?

Queen. And, being so loved as you of
me,

I would make use of love, and in good
time

Put the scythe to it, and reap; it should
not rot

As corn ungarnered, it should bring
forth bread

And fruit of life to strengthen me: but,
mark,

Who would eat bread must earn bread:
would you be king?

Bothwell. Nay, but servant ever to
my queen.

Queen. Let us go forth; the evening
will be fair.

SCENE VII.—EDINBURGH: THE PAR-
LIAMENT-HOUSE.

*The QUEEN seated in state; near her
DU'ROC and MURRAY; DARNLEY
in front, as at his arraignment; on
the one side the Lords of the Congrega-
tion; on the other those of the Queen's
party, BOTHWELL, HUNTLEY, CAITH-
NESS, ATHOL, and the ARCHBISHOP
of ST. ANDREW'S.*

Queen. My lords, ye hear by his own
word of hand

How fair and loyally our father writes,
To purge his name that had indeed no
soil

Of any blame to us-ward; though he
have

No power upon our wedded lord his
son

To heal his heart's disease of discon-
tent:

Which, for myself, before God's face
and yours

I do protest I know not what thing
done

Hath in my lord begotten or brought
forth,

Nor of what ill he should complain in
me.

Nay, here in very faith and humble-
ness

I turn me to him, and with clasped
hands beseech

That he would speak even all his mind
of me,

In what thing ever I have given my
lord offence,

And if before him I stand blameworthy
Would lay my blame for burden on my
head

In this high presence; which to bear
shall be

At once for penance and instruction to
me,

Who know not yet my lightest fault by
name.

Ochiltree. So would we all be certi-
fied of you,

Sir, that your cause may stand forth
visibly,

And men take cognizance of it who
see

Nor root nor fruit now of your discontent;

We pray you, then, make answer to the queen.

Du Croc. My lord, you have held me for a friend, and laid

A friend's trust on me; for that honor's sake

For which I am bounden to you, give me now

But leave to entreat you in all faith of heart

Dishonor not yourself nor this great queen

By speech or silence with a show of shame;

Let it be seen shame hath no portion here,

But honor only and reconciled remorse That pours its bitter balm into the wound

Of love somewhere divided from itself, And makes it whole: I pray you, be it so now.

Queen. An honorable petition, my good lord,

And one that comes reverberate from my heart.

Darnley. I will not stand the question. Are ye set

To bait me like a bondslave? Sirs, I think

There is no worthier man of you than I, Whom ye would chide and bait and mock: howbeit,

Ye shall not wring out of my smitten lips,

As from a child's ye scourge till he speak truth,

One word I would not; rather being thus used

I will go forth the free man that I came, No nobler, but as noble. For your grace,

I have stood too near you now to fall behind,

And stand far back with vassal hat plucked off

To bow at bidding; therefore with free soul

For a long time I take farewell and go, Commending you to God; and if, as seems,

I was or naught or grievous in your eye,

It shall not take offence this many a day

At this that here offends it. So I have done:

Enough said is said well.

Bothwell (aside to the Queen). I never saw

Such heart yet in the fool. Madam, speak now;

I wot he hath made a beard or two of them

Nod favorably.

Queen. What should I say? not I.

Bothwell. Speak to the ambassador; bid him take heed

This feather fly not shipward, and be blown

Out of our hand; speak to him.

Queen. Have no such fear.

He will not fly past arm's length; the French lord

Will hold him safe unbidden. Look, they talk.

Bothwell. And yet I would he had spoken not so high.

I did not think but he would bend, and mourn

Like a boy beaten.

Queen. With what sorrow of heart,

My lords, we have heard such strange and harsh reply

To our good words and meaning, none of you

But must be as ourself to know it well. But since nor kindness nor humble

speech

Nor honest heart of love can so prevail Against the soul of such inveteracy,

But wilful mind will make itself more hard

Than modesty and womanhood are soft Or gentleness can speak it fair, we have

not

One other tear to weep thereon for shame.

So without answer, yea, no word vouchsafed,

As all ye witness, no complaint, no cause,

No reason shown, but all put off in wrath,—

I would not say, ourself in you, my lords,
Mocked with defiance, — it were but a scorn
To hold our session further. Thus in grief
Will we fare hence, and take of you farewell,
Being southward bounden, as ye know, to hear
At Jedburgh what complaint of wrong there is
Between our own folk and the bordering men,
Whose wardens of the English side have wrought us
Fresh wrong but late; and our good warden here
Shall go before us to prepare our way.

SCENE VIII. — HERMITAGE CASTLE.

The QUEEN and BOTHWELL.

Bothwell. I did not think you could have rid so fast.

Queen. There is no love in you to lift your heart,
Nor heart to lift the fleshly weight, and bear
Forward: I struck my love even as a spur
Into the tired side of my horse, and made it
Leap like a flame that eats up all its way
Till I were here.

Bothwell. Why came you not before?

Queen. What! am I now too slow?

Bothwell. Ay, though you rode
Beyond the sun's speed, yea, the race of time
That runs down all men born. Forgive it me
That I was wroth and weary for your love,
Here lying alone, out of your eyes; I could not
But chafe and curse, sending my spirit forth
From this maimed flesh yet halting with its wound
To move about you like a thought, and bring me
Word of your works and ways.

Queen. I could not come.

Bothwell. Was there so much work worthier to be done
Than this, to give love and to take again

Thus? but for my part, of all things in the world

I hold this best, to love you; and I think

God never made your like for man to love.

Queen. You are my soldier; but these silk-soft words

Become your lips as well as mine, when love

Rekindles them; how good it is to have
A man to love you! here is man indeed,

Not fool or boy, to make love's face ashamed,

To abash love's heart, and turn to bitterness

The sweet blood-current in it. O my fair lord!

How fairer is this warrior face, and eyes

With the iron light of battle in them left

As the after-fire of sunset left in heaven
When the sun sinks, than any fool's face made

Of smiles and courtly color! Now I feel

As I were man too, and had part myself
In your great strength; being one with you as I,

How should not I be strong? It is your deed,

By grace of you and influence, sir, it is
That I fear nothing; how should I lift up

Mine eyes to your eyes, O my light o' the war,

And dare be fearful? yours but looked upon,

Though mine were timorous as a dove's affrayed,

For very shame would give them heart, and fire

To meet the eyes of danger. What were I

To have your love, and love you, and yet be

No more than women are whose name
 is fear
 And their hearts bloodless, — I, who
 am part of you,
 That have your love for heart's blood?
 Shall I think
 The blood you gave me fighting for
 my sake
 Has entered in my veins, and grown in
 me
 To fill me with you? O my lord, my
 king,
 Love me! I think you cannot love me
 yet,
 That have done naught nor borne for
 love of you;
 But by the eye's light of all-judging
 God,
 That if I lie shall burn my soul in hell,
 There is not in this fierce world any
 thing,
 Scorn, agony, stripes, bonds, fears, woes,
 deep shame,
 Kingdomless ruin, but with open hands,
 With joyous bosom open as to love,
 Yea, with soul thankful for its great
 delight
 And life on fire with joy, for this love's
 sake
 I would embrace and take it to my
 heart.
Bothwell. Why, there should need
 not this to love you well;
 What should you have to bear for me,
 my queen,
 Or how should I more love you? Nay,
 sweet, peace,
 Let not your passion break you; your
 breast burns,
 Your very lips taste bitter with your
 tears.
Queen. It is because — O God that
 pities us! —
 I may not always lie thus, may not
 kneel,
 Cling round your hands and feet, or
 with shut eyes
 Wait till your lips be fast upon my face,
 And laugh with very love intolerable
 As I laugh now. Look, now I do not
 weep,
 I am not sad nor angered against heaven
 That ever he divides us; I am glad

That yet I have mine hour. Sweet, do
 not speak,
 Nor do not kiss me; let mine eyes but
 rest
 In the love's light of yours, and for a
 space
 My heart lie still, late drunken with
 love's wine,
 And feel the fierce fumes lessen and go
 out
 And leave it healed. Oh! I have bled
 for you
 The nearest inward blood that is my
 life
 Drop by drop inly, till my swooning
 heart
 Made my face pale. I should look
 green and wan
 If by heart's sickness and blood-wast-
 ing pain
 The face be changed indeed; for all
 these days
 Your wound bled in me, and your face
 far off
 Was as a moving fire before mine
 eyes
 That might not come to see you; I was
 dead,
 And yet had breath enough, speech,
 hearing, sight,
 To feel them strange and insupport-
 able.
 I know now how men live without a
 heart.
 Does your wound pain you?
Bothwell. What! I have a wound?
Queen. How should one love enough,
 though she gave all,
 Who had your like to love? I pray
 you tell me,
 How did you fight?
Bothwell. Why, what were this to
 tell?
 I caught this reiver, by some chance of
 God,
 That put his death into mine hand,
 alone,
 And charged him; foot to foot we
 fought some space,
 And he fought well; a gallant knave,
 God wot,
 And worth a sword for better soldier's
 work

Than these thieves' brawls. I would
have given him life
To ride among mine own men here and
serve,
But he would not: so being sore hurt i'
the thigh

I pushed upon him suddenly, and clove
His crown through to the chin.

Queen. I will not have you
Henceforth for warden of these borders,
sir;
We have hands enow for that and heads
to cleave

That but their wives will weep for.

Bothwell. Have no fear.
This hour had healed me of more
grievous wounds:

When it shall please you sign me to
your side,
Think I am with you.

Queen. I must ride—woe's me!
The hour is out. Be not long from
me, love;

And till you come, I swear by your own
head

I will not see the thing that was my
lord,

Though he came in to Jedburgh. I had
thought

To have spoken of him, but my lips
were loath

To mar with harsh intrusion of his
name

The least of all our kisses. Let him
be:

We shall have time. How fair this
castle stands!

These hills are greener, and that sing-
ing stream

Sings sweeter, and the fields are bright-
er faced,

Than I have seen or heard; and these
good walls

That keep the line of kingdom, all my
life

I shall have mind of them to love them
well.

Nay, yet I must to horse.

Bothwell. Ay must you, sweet;
If you will ride thus fifty mile a day,
But for your face you should be man
indeed.

Queen. But for my face?

Bothwell. If you will make me mad—
Queen. I dare not dwell with mad-
men; sir, farewell.

Bothwell. But for your love, and for
its cruelty,
I would have said, you should be man.

Queen. Alas!
But for my love? nay, now you speak
but truth;

For I well knew there was no love in
man.

But we grow idle in this our laboring
time.

When we have wrought through all
the heat o' the day,

We may play then unblamed, and fear
no hand

To push us each from other: now fare-
well.

SCENE IX.—THE QUEEN'S LODGING
AT JEDBURGH.

The three MARIES.

Mary Carmichael. What, will she
die? how says this doctor now?

Mary Seyton. He thinks by chafing
of her bloodless limbs

To quicken the numbed life to sense
again

That is as death now in her veins; but
surely

I think the very spirit and sustenance
That keeps the life up current in the
blood

Hath left her as an empty house, for
death,

Entering, to take and hold it.

Mary Beaton. I say, no;
She will not die of chance or weariness:
This fever caught of riding and hot
haste

Being once burnt out, as else naught
ails her, will not

Leave her strength tainted: she is
manly made,

And good of heart; and even by this
her brain,

We see, begins to settle; she will live.

Mary Carmichael. Pray God she
may, and no time worse than this
Come through her death on us and all
her land

Left lordless for men's swords to carve
and share, —

Pray God she die not.

Mary Beaton. From my heart, amen!
God knows and you if I would have her
die.

Mary Seyton. Would you give up
your loving life for hers?

Mary Beaton. I shall not die before
her; nor, I think,

Live long when she shall live not.

Mary Seyton. A strange faith:

Who put this confidence in you? or is it
But love that so assures you to keep
life

While she shall keep, and lose when
she shall lose

For very love's sake?

Mary Beaton. This I cannot tell,

Whence I do know it; but that I know
it I know,

And by no casual or conjectural proof
Not yet by test of reason; but I know it
Even as I know I breathe, see, hear,
feed, speak,

And am not dead and senseless of the
sun

That yet I look on: so assuredly
I know I shall not die till she be dead.
Look, she is risen.

*Enter the QUEEN, supported by attend-
ants.*

Queen. What word was in your lips?
That I must die?

Mary Seyton. Heaven hath not such
hard heart.

Queen. I think I shall not, surely, by
God's grace;

Yet no man knows of God when he will
bring

His hour upon him. I am sick and
weak,

And yet unsure if I be whole of mind.
I think I have been estranged from my
right wits

These some days back; I know not.
Prithee tell me,

Have I not slept? I know you, who
you are;

You were about me thus in our first
days,

When days and nights were rose-leaves
that fell off

Without a wind or taint of chafing air,
But passed with perfume from us, and
their death

Had on it still the tender dew of birth.
We were so near the sweet warm wells
of life,

We lay and laughed in bosom of the
dawn,

And knew not if the noon had heat to
burn

Or the evening rain to smite us; being
grown tall,

Our heads were raised more near the
fires of heaven

And bitter strength of storms; then we
were glad,

Ay, glad and good. Is there yet one of
you

Keeps in her mind what hovers now in
mine, —

That sweet strait span of islanded green
ground

Where we played once, and set us
flowers that died

Before even our delight in them was
dead?

Now we are old, delights are first to die
Before the things that breed them.

Mary Seyton (aside). She roams yet.

Mary Beaton. I do remember.

Queen. Yea, I knew it; one day
We wrangled for a rose' sake, and fell
out

With tears and words protesting each
'twas she,

She 'twas that set it; and for very wrath
I plucked up my French lilies, and set
foot

On their gold heads, because you had
chafed me, saying

Those were her flowers who should be
queen in France,

And leave you, being no queen, you
Scottish rose

With simpler leaves unguilt and inno-
cent

That smelt of homelier air; and I mine
well

I rent the rose out of your hand, and
cast

Upon the river's running; and a thorn
Pierced through mine own hand, and
wept not then,

But laughed for anger at you, and glad heart

To have made you weep, being worsted.
What light things

Come back to the light brain that sickness shakes,
And makes the heaviest thought that it can hold

No heavier than a leaf, or gossamer
That seems to link two leaves a minute, then

A breath unlinks them; so my thoughts are,— nay,

And should not so: it may be I shall die.

And as a fool I would not pass away
With babbling lips unpurged and graceless heart

Unreconciled to mercy. Let me see
That holy lord I bade be not far off

While I lay sick — I have not here his name.

My head is tired, yet have I strength at heart

To say one word shall make me friends with God,

Commending to him in the hour of unripe death

The spirit so rent untimely from its house,

And, ere the natural night lay hold on it,

Darkly divided from the light of life.

Pray him come to me.

Mary Beaton. Is it my lord of Ross,
The queen would see? my lord is at her hand.

Enter the BISHOP OF ROSS.

Queen. Most reverend father, my soul's friend, you see

How little queenlike I sit here at wait
Till God lay hand on me for life or death,

With pain for that gold garland of my head

Men call a crown, and for my body's robe

Am girt with mortal sickness: I would fain,

Before I set my face to look on death,
Mine eyes against his eyes, make straight the way

My soul must travel with this flesh put off

At the dark door; I pray you for God's grace

Give me that holy help that is in you
To lighten my last passage out of sight.
For this world's works, I have done with them this day,

With mine own lips while yet their breath was warm

Commending to my lords the natural charge

Of their born king, and by my brother's mouth

To the English queen the wardship of her heir,

And by the ambassador's of France again

To his good mistress and my brother king

The care of mine unmothered child, who has

No better friends bequeathable than these;

And for this land have I besought them all,—

Who may beseech of no man aught again,—

That here may no man for his faith be wronged

Whose faith is one with mine that all my life

I have kept, and fear not in it now to die.

Bishop of Ross. Madam, what comfort God hath given his priests

To give again, what stay of spirit and strength

May through their mean stablish the souls of men

To live or die unvexed of life or death,
Unwounded of the fear and fang of hell,

Doubt not to have; seeing though no man be good,

But one is good, even God, yet in his eye

The man that keeps faith sealed upon his soul

Shall through the blood-shedding of Christ be clean.

And in this time of cursing and flawed faith

<p>Have you kept faith unflawed, and on your head The immediate blessing of the spouse of God. Have no fear therefore but your sins of life, Or stains and shadows such as all men take, In this world's passage, from the touch of time, Shall fall from off you as a vesture changed, And leave your soul for whiteness as a child's. <i>Queen.</i> I would have absolution ere I die, But of what sins I have not strength to say Nor hardly to remember. I do think I have done God some service, holding fast Faith, and his Church's fear; and have loved well His name and burden set on me to serve, To bear his part in the eye of this thwart world, And witness of his cross; yet know myself To be but as a servant without grace Save of his lord's love's gift; I have sinned in pride, Perchance, to be his servant first, and fight, In face of all men's hate and might, alone, Here sitting single-sceptred, and com- pel For all its many-mouthed inveteracy The world with bit and bridle like a beast Brought back to serve him, and bowed down to me, Whose hand should take and hale it by the mane, And bend its head to worship as I bade, I, first among his faithful; so I said, And foolishly; for I was high of heart; And now, behold, I am in God's sight and man's Nothing; but though I have not so much grace To bind again this people fast to God,</p>	<p>I have held mine own faith fast, and with my lips Have borne him witness if my heart were whole. <i>Bishop of Ross.</i> Therefore shall he forget not in your hour, Nor for his child reject you; and shall make The weight and color of your sins on earth More white and light than wool may be or snow. <i>Queen.</i> Yea, so my trust is of him; though as now Scarce having in me breath or spirit of speech I make not long confession, and my words Through faintness of my flesh lack form; yet, pray you, Think it but sickness and my body's fault That comes between me and my will, who fain Would have your eye look on my naked soul, And read what writing there should be washed out With mine own heart's tears, and with God's dear blood, Who sees me for his penitent; for surely My sins of wrath and of light-minded- ness, And waste of wanton will and wander- ing eyes, Call on me with dumb tongues for penitence; Which I beseech you let not God reject For lack of words that I lack strength to say. For here, as I repent and put from me, In perfect hope of pardon, all ill thoughts, So I remit all faults against me done, Forgive all evil toward me of all men, Deed or device to hurt me; yea, I would not There were one heart unreconciled with mine When mine is cold; I will not take death's hand With any soil of hate or wrath or wrong</p>
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About me, but being friends with this
past world
Pass from it in the general peace of
love.

Mary Beaton. Here is some message
from the world of friends,
Brought to your brother: shall my lord
come in?

Queen. What lord? ye have no lord
of any man
While I am lady of all you. Who is
this?

Message? what message? whence?

Enter MURRAY.

Murray. From Edinburgh
Your husband new alighted in sharp
speed

Craves leave of access to your majesty.

Queen. By heaven, I had rather death
had leave than he.

What comes he for? to vex me quick
or dead

With his lewd eyes and sodden sidelong
face

That I may die again with loathing of
him?

By God, as God shall look upon my
soul,

I will not see him. Bid him away, and
keep

Far off as Edinburgh may hold him
hence

Among his fellows of the herded swine
That not for need but love he wallows
with

To expend his patrimony of breath and
blood

In the dear service of dishonoring
days.

Murray. Let him but bide the night
here.

Queen. Not an hour;
Not while his horse may breathe. I
will not see him.

Murray. Nay, for the world's sake,
and lest worse be said;
Let him sleep here, and come not in
your sight.

Queen. Unless by some mean I be
freed of him,
I have no pleasure upon earth to live.
I will put hand to it first myself. My
lord,

See how this ill man's coming shakes
my soul,

And stains its thoughts with passionate
earth again

That were as holy water, white and
sweet,

For my rechristening; I could weep
with wrath

To find between my very prayer and
God

His face thrust like a shameful thought
in sleep.

I cannot pray nor fix myself on heaven
But he must loose my hold, break up
my trust,

Unbind my settled senses, and pluck
down

My builded house of hope. Would he
were dead

That puts my soul out of its peace with
God!

Comfort me, father; let him not have
way;

Keep my soul for me safe, and full of
heaven

As it was late. — See that you rid him
hence,

I charge you, sir, with morning.

Murray. Yea, I shall;

'Twere best he saw you not.

Queen. I think so. Hark!

Who is there lighted after him? I
heard —

Nay, he is sick yet, wounded; yet I
heard —

Pray God he be not risen too soon,
to ride

With his wound's danger for my sick-
ness' sake.

Mary Beaton. It is my lord the war-
den.

Queen. What! I knew it, —

So soon so far, and with such speed!
ay, never

Had queen so ill befriended of her own
So fast a friend and loving. I will see
him;

I am stronger than I was. Give me
your hands;

I can stand upright surely. Come you
in,

And help to attire me like a living
queen;

These are as grave-clothes. One go
bring me word
How he looks now,—if weak or well
indeed,
If stout of cheer or tired. Say, for his
coming
And care unbidden of me, I thank him
not
If he have done his own wound hurt
thereby.
I will but rest, and see him: bring me
in. [Exeunt.]

SCENE X.—CRAIGMILLAR.

The QUEEN, MURRAY, BOTHWELL,
MAITLAND, HUNTLEY, and ARGYLE.

Queen. If it must be, or all without
it break,
I am content to have Lord Morton
home;
Nay, all of them ye will, save two I
keep
To be the food of justice and my
wrath,
Now hunger-starven; his red hand who
set
To my child-burdened breast the iron
death,
And the uncle of my caitiff; they shall
bleed,
As Ruthven should, but for death's
hastier hand
That plucked him up before me: for
his son,
Let him come back too.

Maitland. It is nobly judged,
And shall content the lords and land
alike
With such good counsel and such fair
consent
To see your highness moved to rid
yourself
Of their disease and yours, with all
men's will
Purged from you by the readiest mean
we may.

Queen. Ay, by divorce: I have then
your tongues to that,—
Yours, both my friends now that were
ill friends once,
But handfast here in common faith to
me

And equal-hearted; and my brother's
voice,
Joined with these good lords present:
but you said,
Was it not you said, sir, that by divorce,
Though leave were given of them that
might withhold,
And the priest's word that bound un-
bound us, yet
Some soil might fall from lips of evil
will
On our son's birth-name?

Maitland. Yea, from ill men's mouths
And all that hate you such rebuke might
fall,

Which were foul shame to suffer and
be dumb,
Though made by your divorce unan-
swerable.

Queen. In sooth, I thought so; and
howbeit yourself,
My lord of Bothwell, by the judgment
given

That loosed your mother's from your
father's hand
Stood undespoyled in fair inheritance,
It may be where the cast is of a
crown,
And such a crown as in contention
shakes

Two several-storied kingdoms, even the
chance
Should stand not questionable, and
friend nor foe
Have word to throw against it.

Maitland. So I said.
Bothwell. Yet must the queen be
freed; and for the fear

Lest England for his sake be moved, I
know not
What hold it has upon us, who but
now
Saw what good heart and loyal will
they bear

To the right heirship of your majesty
Who bide on our south border, when
their guns

From Berwick hailed you passing
hither, and made
The loud-mouthed crags cry to their
batteries back,
And tell the sundering Tweed and all
green hills,

And all the clamorous concourse of the sea,
 The name that had the lordship of both lands
 In heritage to bind them fast in one.
 There heart and tongue outspake of the true north
 That for his caitiff sake should not be moved
 Nor alter from its faith though he were cast,
 With haltered throat or millstone round his neck,
 From a queen's bed into the naked sea.
Mailland. Madam, we are here for service of your grace,
 Chief of your council and nobility:
 We shall find mean whereby without wrong done
 To your son's title, you shall well be quit
 Of your ill-minded husband; and albeit
 My lord of Murray present here be one
 As scrupulous of his faith a Protestant
 As is your grace a Papist, he will look
 As through his fingers on the work we do,
 And say no word, I am well assured,
 of all
 His eye may wink on.
Queen. Nay, I cannot tell;
 I would not have mine honor touched,
 nor buy
 My peace with hurt of conscience;
 being so wise
 As silence proves you or as speech proclaims,
 Ye shall do well to let this be; perchance
 The good ye mean me being untimely done
 Might turn to my displeasure, and your hands
 Leave me more hurt than holpen.
Murray. You say well;
 For none but honorable and lawful ends
 Have I desired this council, to procure
 Your just and honest freedom, and repeal
 The banished Morton, whose advice thereto
 Shall not be fruitless; for no further aim
 To no strange mean have I put hand.
 Farewell. [Exit.]

Argyle. He will not know of us enough to thwart;
 And so not least may serve us; but if here
 These hands whose help would hurt you not be set
 To such a bond as may put forth our cause,
 And bind us to sustain it with one soul,
 Shall they more hurt than help you?
Queen. Nay, ye are wise;
 I know not; but I think your helpful hands
 Could not be set but to my service.
Huntley. Then
 Should we set down what reason of resolve
 We have to make it manifest and sure
 That this young fool and tyrant by our will
 Shall bear no rule among us, and thereto
 For divers causes shall he be put forth
 One way or other, and what man soe'er
 Shall take this deed in hand, or do it, all we
 Shall as our own and general act of all
 Defend and fortify it.
Queen. Must all set hands
 To one same bond for warrant?
Bothwell. Who should fail?
 Not we that shall devise it, nor Balfour,
 My kinsman here and friend.
Queen. Must you sign too?
Bothwell. How must I not? am I not fit to serve
 As being or coward or faithless or a fool,
 Or all or any? or what misdoubt of yours
 Should wash my writing out or blur my name?
 What faith a faithful servant of his hands
 May freely challenge of the king they serve,
 So much I challenge of your majesty.
Queen. Nay, my fair lord, but for your known faith's sake
 And constant service the less need it were
 To have your hand here on our side
 lest men

Should lay the deed but on mine ancient friends,

Whose names not all men love yet for my sake,

And call it but our privy plot and hate, Which is the judgment of all wisest lords

And equal sentence of the general land.

Maitland. So we that were not counted with your friends Should bear the whole deed and its danger up, —

We whom you have loved not, madam, for the stand

We made against the perilous loves and hates

That loosened half your people's love from you.

Yet must we have his hand too.

Bothwell. Ay, and shall.

I wear no gloves when hands are bared to strike.

Queen. Be it as you will; I am nothing in your count;

So be it; my counsel shall not cumber you.

Do all ye list.

Maitland. And all that shall be done Will be the more strength to your majesty,

And comfort to your cause: which now we go

With all our help to hearten.

Queen. Go, and thrive.

[*Exit* MAITLAND, HUNTLEY, and ARGYLE

I would we had no need of such men's tongues.

Bothwell. He has the wisest name on all their side;

And by the tether that holds fast his faith

We lead their lesser wits what way we will.

Sharp-spirited is he surely, deep of soul, Cunning and fearless; one that gives, men say,

Small heed or honor to their faiths or fears

And breath of holy custom; undistraught

By doubt of God's hand paddling in our clay

Or dream of God's eye slanted on our sin;

As one that holds more worthily of God,

— Or would not hold at all — whate'er he be,

Than of a sidelong scrupulous overseer That pries askance upon our piteous lives

To judge of this and this, how ill or well,

And mark souls white or black with coal or chalk

For crowning or for burning, palms or fires;

One therefore that through all shut ways of life

Lets his soul range, even like the all-winning wind,

And ply her craft in all life's businesses

Not like a blind man burdened; sure of hand

And great of counsel, like an under fire That works in the earth and makes its breach by night,

And leaps a league's length at the first stride forth

Of its free foot, blackening the face of men;

So strong and keen and secret is his soul.

Queen. So he keep trust, I care not if his creed

Be faced or lined with craft and atheism,

His soul be close or open; but what bond

Shall bind him ours so sure that fraud nor force

May serve against us more?

Bothwell. Doubt me not that;

By hilt, not edge, we hold him as a sword

That in our hand shall bend not till we break,

If we would break it when our work is done.

Queen. Have we the strength? I doubt not of this hand,

That holds my heart, if it be strong or no,

More than I doubt of the eyes that light mine eyes,

The lips that my lips breathe by, — O
 my life,
 More than I doubt of mine own bitter
 love,
 More than of death's no power to sun-
 der us,
 Of his no force to quench me who am
 fire, —
 Fire for your sake, that would put all
 these out
 To shine and lighten in your sight alone
 For warmth and comfort, being to all
 eyes beside
 Or fear or ruin more fleet of foot than
 fear.
 I would I had on breast or hand or
 brow
 In crown or clasp the whole gold
 wrought of the earth,
 In one keen jewel the store of all the
 sea,
 That I might throw down at your hand
 or foot
 Sea, land, and all that in them is of
 price,
 Or in the strong wine of my piercing
 love
 Melt the sole pearl of the earth, and
 drink dissolved
 The cost of all the world's worth.
Bothwell. Yea, my queen?
 Have then no fear what man shall deem
 or do;
 For by this fire and light of you I
 swear, —
 That is my sunlight and my fire of
 day, —
 We shall not walk as they that walk by
 night
 Toward our great goal uncertainly, nor
 swerve
 Till we strike foot against it. Kiss me
 now,
 And bid me too speed on my way with
 them
 To bring back all their hands here to
 the bond
 Set fast as mine, or as your heart is fast
 Set on his death whose life lies nigh
 burnt out,
 Half brand, half ash already, in the heat
 Of that bright wrath which makes as
 red as flame

Your fearful and sweet splendor; nay
 by heaven,
 It flushes all the light about your face
 With seven-times-kindled color of pure
 fire,
 And burns mine eyes beholding, as
 your lips
 And quick breath burn me kissing. My
 sweet fear,
 Had you not been the sweetest, even
 to me
 You must have been the fearfullest
 thing alive.
Queen. For love is so, and I am very
 love,
 And no more queen or woman; have
 no heart,
 No head, no spirit or sense at all of life.
 Save as of love that lives and that is I,
 I that was woman, and bore rule alone
 Upon myself; who am all dis-king-
 domed now,
 Made twice a slave, — mine own soul's
 thrall, and yours
 Who wield the heart that wields me at
 your will.
 I can but do as wills the spirit in me
 Which is your spirit's servant. Ah,
 my lord, —
 My one lord every way, my poor heart's
 blood,
 Breath of my lips and eyesight of mine
 eyes, —
 How did I live the life that loved you
 not?
 What were those days wherein I walked
 apart,
 And went my way, and did my will
 alone,
 And thought and wrought without you
 in the world?
 Then I did evil and folly: the more
 need
 I purge me now, and perfect my desire,
 Which is to be no more your lover, no,
 But even yourself, yea more than body
 and soul,
 One and not twain, one utter life, one
 fire,
 One will, one doom, one deed, one
 spirit, one God;
 For we twain grown and molten each
 in each

Surely shall be as God is and no man.

Bothwell. God speed us, then, till we grow up to God!

Me first, who first shall clear our way to climb

By carving one weed's earthly coil away
That cumberbs our straight growing:
pray for me!

I will have all their hands to it in an hour.

SCENE XI. — COURTYARD OF A HOSTELRY AT WHITTINGHAM.

BOTHWELL and MORTON.

Morton. Fled in pure fear of me? well, he knows best.

Towards Glasgow, said you?

Bothwell. Soon as came the word
You were brought home with welcome
of the queen,

He spurs from Stirling with all heat of speed,—

Even from her arms new-reconciled and face

That favorably had received him;
leaves the feast

Half made, and his unchristened yearning there

Not yet signed God's, and dewy from the font

Long waited for, till the English golden gift

Was grown too strait to hold and halow him,—

Flies from all sight and cheer of festal folk,

And on the way being smitten sick with fear

Cries out of poison working in his flesh
Blue-spotted as with ulcerous pestilence,

Weeps himself dead, and wails himself alive,

As now he lies, but bedrid; and has lain

This Christmas through, while the queen held her feast

At Drummond Castle.

Morton. Yea, I heard so; and you At Tullibardine likewise, or men lie, Kept the feast high beside her. Well, my lord,

Now have you time and room to say for each

What ye would have of me, the queen and you,

Who are hand and tongue at once of her design.

Here am I newly lighted, hot from horse,

But fresh come forth of exile and ill days

To do you service: let me have her hand

For warrant of what dangerous work she will,

And mine is armed to do it; but till I have,

Expect of me, who have seen times strange as this,

Nothing.

Bothwell. I have her warrant in my lips;

By me she speaks you safe in serving her.

Morton. Let that secure yourself: I must have proofs.

Bothwell. You shall have all, and written; but your hand Must be in this with ours.

Morton. I have cause enough,
Good reason and good will to see it performed,

But will not strike through mine own side at him:

Make your mind sure of that.

Bothwell. Well, you shall have it;
Myself will fetch your warrant from her hand

That from my mouth assures you not; and then —

Morton. Then shall my hand make answer to her own. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XII. — CALLANDER.

The QUEEN and LADY RERES.

Queen. I do not feel as at past partings: then

My heart was sick and bitter, and mine eye

Saw not beyond the grievous hour at hand;

Now when of all time I should be most sad,

To crave its pardon of you, and for
 grace
 From your dread lips some comfortable
 word
 That may assure him who now lives in
 pain
 Through the evil news he hears from
 all winds blown,
 In all mouths open; whence as one
 distraught,
 And knowing not how to bear himself
 secure

Or dare put forth to meet you, for the
 words
 He hears you have said, though fain, I
 know, to come
 And clear himself of aught that you
 suspect
 By present inquisition, — this I know,
 Though now he laid no charge on me
 to say, —

He hath writ you word already of his
 grief,
 And finds no answer but of bitter sound,
 Nor any light of pity from your face,
 Nor breath of healing; wherefore on
 my knees
 He kneels before you to require his
 doom.

Queen. I have no remedy for fear;
 there grows
 No herb of help to heal a coward
 heart.
 Fears were not rank were faults not
 rank in him.

Crawford. It is no caitiff doubt that
 pleads with you,
 No rootless dread sprung of a craven
 mood
 That bows him down before your high-
 ness' foot
 To take the sovereign sentence of your
 eye
 And bide and bear its judgment given
 as God's:
 He knows, he says, by proof and speech
 of men
 What cause he has what friends of
 yours to fear.

Queen. What! must I ride alone to
 comfort him?
 Tell him he may sleep sure, then, though
 I come:

Lord Bothwell is bound back to Edin-
 burgh;
 There is no man to affright him in my
 train
 But grooms and lackeys; and, for all
 I hear,
 He never feared my women.
Crawford. Please it you,
 My master doth but wish all hearts of
 men
 Were on their faces written with their
 faith.

Queen. Hath he no more than this,
 our lord, to say?
 Then let him hold his peace; and bear
 him word
 That of our grace we come to cherish
 him
 With not a man's face to procure his
 dread.
 Tell him so much, and bid him keep
 good heart,
 If heart he have, even for my sake,
 who swear
 He shall not long live in this fear of
 me.

SCENE XIII. — DARNLEY'S LODGING
 IN GLASGOW.

DARNLEY *on a couch, as sick*; CRAW-
 FORD *in attendance.*

Darnley. She is come in, then?
Crawford. Presently she comes.
Darnley. You found her yet more
 sharp of eye than tongue?
Crawford. Ay.

Darnley. Would I had but strength
 to bring myself
 Forth of this land where none will pity
 me, —
 No, not the least of all you, though I
 die.
 Who comes with her? what house-
 hold? I would speak
 With Joachim her French fellow there,
 to know
 Why she should come, — you cannot
 show me, — ay,
 And if for good; and if they come with
 her, —
 Her outland folk and Bothwell's, — or,
 at least,

If she have mind yet to send off or
 no
 Joseph, her dead knave's brother. Are
 you sure
 Himself shall come not? wherefore, be-
 ing come in,
 Should she not lodge beside me? Nay,
 I hear
 More than she wots of, and have spies
 that see
 What counsels breed among the crew
 of them.
 What talk was that of marriage that
 should be
 Between her fiddler and no maid of
 hers,
 To what fair end? Would God I
 might take ship!
 I would make speed for England; there
 at least
 They durst not lay their nets about my
 life:
 Here every wind that blows hath smells
 of blood.
 I am lost and doomed; lost, lost!
Crawford. Have better thoughts.
 Take hope to you, and cheer.
Darnley. Ay, ay, much cheer!
 Ye are all in one to abuse me, snare
 and slay, —
 Ye are all one heart to hate, one hand
 to smite;
 I have none to love nor do me good,
 not one,
 One in the world's width, of all souls
 alive.
 I am dead and slain already in your
 hearts.
 By God, if ever I stand up strong again,
 I will be even with all you. Doth she
 think
 I fear her? there is none that lives I
 fear.
 What said she to you?
Crawford. With her last breath she
 said
 You should no longer live in fear of
 her.
Darnley. Why, so I do not: nay, nor
 ever did.
 Let her come now, and find I fear her
 not.
 What shall she say?

(*Without.*) Make way there for the
 queen!

Enter the QUEEN, attended.

Queen. How is it with our lord?

Darnley. Ill is it, — ill,

Madam, and no lord but your servant
 here.

Will you not kiss me?

Queen. Nay, you are sick indeed.

Let me sit here, and give me but your
 hand.

I have a word with you to speak for
 love,

And not for chiding.

Darnley. I beseech you, no:

I have no force to bear man's chiding
 now,

Being sick, and all my sickness is of
 you,

That look so strange and heavily on
 me;

Howbeit I could now die, I am made so
 glad,

For very joy to see you. If I die,

Look, I leave all things to your only
 will,

And of my pure love make no testa-
 ment,

Nor lay no charge on any else for
 love.

Queen. I will rebuke you not but
 tenderly,

As a right wife and faithful woman.
 Sir,

What word was that you wrote me, and
 wherein

And wherefore taxing some for cruelty,
 Of what suspicion misconceived and

born,
 That came forth of your hand to strike
 my heart?

You that have found no cause, and will
 not say

You have found or shall find ever cause
 of fear,

So to misdoubt me, — what could sting
 you so,

What adder-headed thought or venom-
 ous dream,

To make you shoot at this bared breast
 to you

Suspicion winged and whetted with ill
 thoughts?

What words were these to write, what
 doubts to breed,
 Of mere mistrust and stark unfriendli-
 ness?
 Nay, and I know not, God can witness
 me,
 So much as what you doubt or what
 misdeem,
 Or wherein hold me dangerous or my
 friends,
 More than I know what source your
 sickness hath,
 Whereof I would fain think all this
 is bred
 And all ill fears grown but of feverish
 nights.
 What cause most ails you? or what
 think you on?
Darnley. I think how I am punished,
 — ay, God knows
 I am punished that I made my God of
 you.
 What should I mean of cruelty but
 yours,
 That will not look on my sore peni-
 tence
 For my least sin, as God would look on
 all?
 Though I confess wherein I have failed
 indeed,
 Yet never in worse kind than was
 avowed;
 And many a man for such revolt as
 mine
 Hath had your pardon: in this kind I
 have sinned,
 Not in such wise as ever I denied,
 And am yet young; and though you
 should cast up
 How often being forgiven I have gone
 back,
 And fallen in fresh offence of you that
 late
 Forgave me, may not any twice or
 thrice
 So slip that is none older than I am,
 Or slack his promise plighted, yet in
 the end,
 Repenting, by experience be chastised?
 If my weak years and grief may get but
 grace,
 I swear I never shall make fault again;
 And this is all, and honest, that I crave,
 To have again my wife to bed and
 board,
 Which if I may not by consent of you
 Out of this bed I never will rise more.
 I pray you tell me whereof you re-
 solve,
 That I may die or live, who have no
 thought
 But only of you; and at such luckless
 time
 As ever I offend you, even the offence
 Grows of yourself; for when I am
 wronged or wroth
 If I for refuge might complain to
 you
 Of any that offends me, I would speak
 Into no ear but yours; but being
 estranged,
 What now soe'er I hear, necessity
 Binds me to keep it in my breast, and
 hence
 I am moved to try my wit on mine own
 part
 For very anger. Now, being at your
 foot,
 Will you forgive me? that for love in-
 deed
 And fear of you have trespassed, being
 so young,
 And had no good man's counsel, and
 no guard,
 No light, no help, no stay, — was yet
 scarce man,
 And have so loved you whom I sinned
 against.
Queen. Why would you pass in the
 English ship away?
Darnley. I swear by God I never
 thought thereon;
 I spake but with the men: but though I
 had,
 I might have well ta'en hold on such a
 thought,
 To hear much less things than the least
 I heard.
Queen. What inquisition was it that
 you made
 To hear such things as fright you?
Darnley. Nay, by heaven,
 I have made none; I never sought man
 out
 To speak with any; I swear I see no
 spies.

Queen. Must I return to your own ear again
 The very words were spoken?
Dorothy. I did hear
 There was a letter brought you to subscribe
 By certain of the council, to the intent
 I should be cast in prison, and with power
 To slay me by your warrant, should I make
 Resistance: Highgate said so; I confess
 I spake with him; my father that first heard
 Brought him to speech of me.
Queen. Spake he so much?
 But Walcar, that at Stirling brought me word
 Of this man's speeches here, had heard of him
 That you with certain of our lords had laid
 A plot to take our son, and having crowned
 Reign for him king of Scots; whereon the man,
 Being had before our council with good speed,
 Swore he knew no such tale, and had but heard
 Some rumour blown of your imprisonment,
 But nothing of your slaying; to which again
 His witness summoned gave him straight the lie.
 Yet would I not conceive the tale for true,
 That, being incensed with some our loyal lords
 Who were not of the faction that should lay
 Such regency upon you for your son,
 You had threatened them aloud with wrath to come.
 What say you to it?
Dorothy. I say you do me wrong
 To speak to me of him that as you say
 Belied me to you: who saith so of me lies,
 And I will pluck his ears from off his head,
 The knave whose tongue so misdelivers me.
 And, I beseech you, think he lies that saith
 I would be wroth with any man your friend.
 Or would not rather give away my life
 Than by despite toward such displease you: yet
 I have heard strange things here of a trustier tongue.
 The Laird — you know him — of Minto, my fast friend,
 If any friend be fast on earth to me,
 He told me to what bond what hands were set:
 Yea, and more hands than those that signed me dead,
 He swore, were set to slay me; but God knows
 I gave no faith to it, — would not dream of doubt
 You could devise, that were my proper flesh,
 To do me any evil; nay, I said
 It was well seen you would not, by their writ
 Against my life that you subscribed not; else,
 Could I think once you hungered for my death,
 God knows I would not hold you hungering long,
 But make mine own throat naked for your knife
 As readily as your hand could pluck it forth:
 Howbeit the best man of mine enemies else
 Should buy me dear — ay, any of all but you,
 Except he took me sleeping; as indeed
 Were now not hard to take me: had I but
 A hand to help my heart, and health to go,
 A foot to stand against them, God and you,
 Madam, should oversee us and judge; but now
 You see what power I have, what hope of help,

What strength to serve my will and my
 best heart
 Lies in my broken body; ay, these
 know that,
 What force is left to second my good-
 will
 They know who durst not else devise
 or do,
 Had I the natural might yet of my
 limbs,
 What now— But you, if you have pity
 of me,
 Seeing me how faint I am and how sore
 sick
 And cannot eat for weakness, though I
 faint,
 That makes me loathe my meat, — but
 will you not
 Feed me and kiss me? surely I could
 live,
 Being quickened of your hands and
 piteous lips,
 So sweet you are, and strong, and large
 of life.
 Nay, do but kiss me once though I
 must die,
 Be it but lest all men say you loved me
 not.
Queen. I have a pain here takes me
 in my side —
 I pray you — where my sickness left it
 sore
 And liable to swift pains yet: pardon
 me.
Darnley. 'Tis I you cannot pardon, —
 I, woe's me,
 You cannot love or pardon; but I
 swear,
 So be it you will not leave me, I will go,
 So but I may not lose you out of sight,
 Borne in a litter, such as here I lie,
 So weak, so full of sickness, where you
 will,
 Be it to Craigmillar, though death went
 with me,
 Or to the world's end, going in sight of
 you.
Queen. Have here my hand, then, and
 my faith to it, sir,
 When there the healing springs have
 washed you whole
 As they shall surely, with cold cleans-
 ing streams

Whose medicinal might shall bathe
 your veins,
 And kill the fire that feeds upon their
 blood,
 I will once more dwell with you as your
 wife,
 In all the lovely works and ways of
 love
 And dues of duteous life and unity
 That man may claim of woman. Tell
 me now, —
 Ere we go thither, where the leecn and
 I
 May help you, nor be far off from my
 son, —
 What are those lords you are wroth at?
 since I hear
 Some are there that you threaten, as in
 doubt
 Their minds are bitter toward you:
 shall I say
 You stand in fear of Maitland?
Darnley. Him? not I, —
 I pray you, speak not of him for my
 sake, —
 I stand in fear of no man: I beseech
 you,
 Speak me not of him; I will see no
 man,
 To be our makebate and your tale-
 bearer;
 I have heard too of your brother, how
 he says
 I spake with him at Stirling, where I
 swear
 I came not in his chamber, spake not
 half
 Of all whereof he has rounded in your
 ear
 That I made plaint to him concerning
 you;
 For all my faults are published in your
 eye;
 And I deny not one, and naught put
 off:
 What should it boot me to deny my
 speech?
 But there are they that think the faults
 they make
 Shall to all time lie still unspoken of,
 Yet will they speak aloud of small and
 great,
 And tax alike all faults of other folk,

The least fault as the worst, in men like me
 That have not craft to hide or most or least.
 God save you from such friendship: it is thought,
 Through power upon you of such evil tongues,
 Yourself have not your power upon yourself,
 As by your slight still of my proffered love
 I would believe you have not; such a friend
 Rode with you hither, — or unfriend as I doubt:
 I like her not, — the Lady Reres, your friend;
 I pray God she may serve you, if she be,
 To your own honor; it runs through all men's mouths,
 She was Lord Bothwell's harlot, who stands marked
 For a lewd liver above all men alive:
 She and her sister both lie side by side
 Under the like report of his rank love, —
 Foul concord and consent unsisterlike
 In such communion as beasts shun for shame.
 Nay, for you know it, it lives on common lips,
 Cries from all tongues, — you know it; but for my part
 I will love all that love you, though they were
 But for that love's sake shameful in men's eyes.
 Why will you wake not with me this one night,
 But so soon leave me, and I sleep so ill?
Queen. Nay, though this night I may not watch with you,
 I leave you not till you turn back with me;
 But for the lords' sake must it not be known,
 That, if you change not purpose ere that time,
 When you are whole, we shall be one again;

Lest when they know it, remembering your loud threat
 To make them find, if ever we agreed,
 What small account they had made of you, and how
 You had counsell'd me to take not some of them
 To grace again without assent of yours,
 They fall in fear and jealousy, to see
 The scene so broken and the play so changed
 Without their knowledge, that contrariwise
 Was first set up before them.
Darnley. Think you then
 They will for that the more esteem of you?
 But I am glad at heart you speak of them,
 And do believe now you desire indeed
 That we should live together in quietness;
 For, were it otherwise, to both of us
 Might worse fall than we wot of; but I now
 Will do whatever you will do, and love
 All that you love; and I have trust in you
 To draw them in like manner to my love;
 Whom since I know they aim not at my life
 I will love all alike, and there shall be
 No more dissension of your friends and mine.
Queen. It was by fault of you all
 This fell out
 That I must heal. For this time, fare you well;
 When I get rest, I will return again.
 [Exit with attendants.]
Darnley. What say you now? she is gentler in mine eyes
 Than was your word of her.
Crawford. Ay, sweet to sight,
 Exceeding gentle. Wherefore, could one tell,
 Should she desire to lead you so in hand
 Just to Craigmillar? whence report came late
 Of no good counsel toward you or good hope,

Except the hope be good, there to be
 healed
 Of all life's ill forever, once being
 bathed
 In the cold springs of death; and hence
 meseems
 More like a prisoner than her wedded
 lord
 Are you borne off as in her bonds.

Darnley. By heaven,
 I think but little less, and fear myself,
 Save for the trust indeed I have in her
 And in her promise only; howsoe'er,
 I will go with her, and put me in her
 hands,
 Though she should cut my throat; and join
 so may God
 Between us both be judge. I have
 been men's fool
 That were but tongues and faces of my
 friends:

I see by mine own sight now, and will
 stand
 On no man's feet but mine. Give me
 to drink;
 I will sleep now; my heart is healed
 of fear.

SCENE XIV. — THE QUEEN'S APART-
 MENT IN THE SAME.
The QUEEN and PARIS.

Queen. Here is the letter for your
 lord to know
 I bring the man on Monday, as is writ,
 Hence to Craigmillar. Say too this by
 mouth,—

The Lady Reres can witness with mine
 oath

I would not let him kiss me. Bid our
 lord,

Mine and your lord, inquire of Mait-
 land first

If our past purpose for Craigmillar
 hold,

Or if the place be shifted, and send
 word

To me that here await his will by you.
 Be of good speed; I say not of good

trust,
 Who know you perfect in his trust and
 mine.

Farewell.

Paris. I am gone with all good haste
 I may,

And here come back to serve your maj-
 esty.

Hath it no further counsel or command
 To be my message?

Queen. Tell him, night and day
 And fear and hope are grown one thing
 to me

Save for his sake: and say mine hours
 and thoughts

Are as one fire devouring grain by
 grain

This pile of tares and drift of crum-
 bling brands

That shrivels up in the slow breath of
 time

The part of life that keeps me far from
 him,

The heap of dusty days that sunder
 us.

I would I could burn all at once away,
 And our lips meet across the mid red
 flame,

Thence unconsumed, being made of
 keener fire

Than any burns on earth. Say that
 mine eyes

Ache with mine heart, and thirst with
 all my veins,

Requiring him they have not. Say my
 life

Is but as sleep, and my sleep very life,
 That dreams upon him. Say I am
 passing now

To do that office he would have me do,
 Which almost is a traitor's; say, his
 love

Makes me so far dissemble, that myself
 Have horror at it; bid him keep in
 mind

How, were it not to obey him, I had
 rather

Be dead before I did it; let him not
 Have ill opinion of me for this cause,

Seeing he is alone the occasion of it
 himself,

Since for mine own particular revenge
 I would not do it to him that I most

hate;

My heart bleeds at it. Say, he will
 not come

But on condition I shall cleave to him
 Hereafter, and on that word given of
 mine

<p>Will go where I would have him go: alas! I never have deceived yet any man, But I remit me to my master's will In all things wholly; bid him send me word What I shall do, and come what may thereof I shall obey him; if some new subtler way By medicine may be thought on when I bring The man here to Craigmillar, that as yet May not this long time of himself go forth Out of the house, let him advise him- self How to put this in hand: for all I find, This man I here endure to play upon Lives now in great suspicion; yet my word Hath credit with him, but not far enough For him to show me any thing; but yet I shall draw forth of him what thing I will If my lord bid me be more plain with him; But I will never take delight to wrong The trust of any that puts trust in me; Yet may my lord command me in all things. And though by checks and hints of that I feared This man sometimes even touch me to the quick With words dropt of mine honor and my power On mine own self, whereby I surely know That he suspects him of the thing we wot And of his life, yet as to that last fear I need but say some three good words to him, And he rejoices, and is out of doubt. He was seen never as gay of mood as now When I make show of grace and gentle heart, And puts me in remembrance of all things</p>	<p>That may assure my faith he loves me well. Let not my love suspect me for his sake, Who take such great joy of his love- making That I come never where he is but straight I take the sickness of my sore side here, I am vexed so with it; wearied might he be, This poisonous man that gives me all this pain, When I would speak of things far sweeter; yet He is marred not overmuch of form or face, Though he have borne much, and his venom'd breath Hath almost slain me though I sit far off. He would have had me watch with him, but I Put off the night; he says he sleeps not sound. He never spake more humbly nor more well; And if I had not proven his heart of wax, And were not mine cut of a diamond Whereinto no shot ever can make breach But that which flies forth of mine own love's hand, I had almost had pity of him; but say I bid the captain of my fortified heart Fear not; the place shall hold unto the death. And bid my love in recompense thereof Let not his own be won by that false kind That will no less strive with him for the same. I think the twain were trained up in one school, For he hath ever tear in eye, and makes Most piteous moan to arouse men's pity, yea, Humbly salutes them all, even to the least, To make their hearts soft toward him; and desires</p>
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<p>That with mine own hands I would give him meat; But let my lord, where he is, give no more trust Than I shall here. Tell him all this; and say I am in the doing here of a work I hate Past measure; and should make him fain to laugh To see me lie so well, or at the least So well dissemble, and tell him truth 'twixt hands. Say, by the flatteries I perforce must make And prayers to him to assure himself of me, And by complaint made of the men de- signed, I have drawn out of him all we list to know, Yet never touched one word of that your lord Showed me, but only wrought by wiles; and say With two false kinds we are coupled, I and he, My love; the Devil dissever us, and God Knit us together for the faithfullest pair That ever he made one: this is my faith, I will die in it. Excuse me to my lord, That I writ ill last night, being ill at ease, And when the rest were sleeping was most glad To write unto him, who might no more, nor could Sleep as they did and as I would de- sire, Even in my dear love's arms; whom I pray God Keep from all evil, and send him all repose. And being so long my letter hindered me To write what tidings of myself I would, Who had wrought before for two hours of the day Upon this bracelet I would send to him, Though it be evil made, for fault of time,</p>	<p>I have had so little, and I can get no lock, Though, that mine hands might end it yester-eve, I would not see the man; but this mean time I think to make one fairer: let him not Bring it in sight of any that was here, For all would know it, seeing it was wrought for haste In sight of them; yet might it bring some harm, And may be seen if he should chance be hurt; Let him send word if he will have it, and say If he will have more gold by you, and when I shall return, and how far I may speak; For this man waxes mad to hear of him Or of my brother; and when I visit him His friends come all to be my convoy, say, And he desires me come the morn betimes And see him rise. This letter that I send, Bid my lord burn it, being so dangerous, With naught in it well said,—for all my mind Was on this craft I loathe to think upon,— And if it find his hand in Edinburgh, Let him soon send me word, and that I doubt Be not offended, since to doubts of him I give not o'er-great credit; but say this, That seeing to obey him, who is my dear heart's love, I spare nor honor, conscience, hazard, state, Nor greatness whatsoever, I beseech him But that he take it in good part, and not As his false brother-in-law interprets, whom I pray him give not ear to nor believe Against the faithfullest lover he ever had Or ever shall have; nor cast eye on her</p>
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Whose feigned tears should not be esteemed so much
 Nor prized so as the true and faithful toils
 Which I sustain but to deserve her place:
 Whereto that I despite all bonds may climb,
 Against my nature I betray them here
 That may prevent me from it; God forgive me,
 And God give him, my only love, the hap
 And welfare which his humble and faithful love
 Desires of him; who hopes to be to him
 Ere long a thing new-named for recompense
 Of all her irksome travails. Tell him this;
 Say I could never stint of hand or tongue
 To send love to him, and that I kiss his hands,
 Ending; and let him think upon his love,
 And write to her, and that oft; and read twice through
 Mine evil-written letter, and keep in mind
 All several sayings writ of the man therein.
 Say for delight I have to send to him
 I run twice over all the words I send,
 And that each word may fasten in his ear
 As in his eye, and you may witness me
 That hand and tongue and heart were one to send,
 Put all my message in your lips again
 That here was written. Say—I know not what;
 I can say naught but with my silent hands,
 Speak with the lips of deeds I do for him.
Paris. Shall I say nothing of Lord Darnley more?
Queen. Say, when I did but speak of Maitland once,
 His caitiff flesh quaked in each joint of him,

Each limb and bone shivered; even to the feet
 He shook, and his shrunk eyes were stark with fright,
 That like a live thing shuddered in his hair,
 And raised it ruffling from the roots for dread.
 Let him mark that: though coward the man be, and fool,
 He has wit and heart enough to know the worst
 Of his wrong-doing, and to what manner of man,
 Being fool, he did it, and discerning him
 Think whether his cause of dread be small or no
 For less or more of peril. So to horse,
 And lose no word sent of my heart to him.

SCENE XV.—KIRK OF FIELD.

Enter BOTHWELL.

Bothwell. This is the time and here the point of earth
 That is to try what fate will make of me.
 I hold here in my hand my hand's desire,
 The fruit my life has climbed for; day on day
 Have I strid over, stretching toward this prize
 With all my thews and spirits. I must be glad,
 If I could think; yet even my cause of joy
 Doth somewhat shake me, that my sense and soul
 Seem in their springs confused, even as two streams
 Violently mingling: what is here to do
 Is less now than the least I yet have done,
 Being but the putting once of the mere hand
 To the thing done already in device,
 Wrought many times out in the working soul.
 Yet my heart revels not, nor feel I now
 The blood again leap in me for delight

That in the thought grew riotous and
beat high
With foretaste of possession unpos-
sessed.

Is it that in all alike fruition slacks
The shrunk imagination? in all deeds
The doing undoes the spirit to do, the
joy

Sickens, the lust is swallowed as of
sand?

Why, yet the stream should run of my
desire

Unshrunk, and no deserts drink it up,
Being unfulfilled; no satiate sluggish-
ness

Gape with dry lips at the edge of the
dry cup

For the poor lees of longing. I am
here

Not royal yet, nor redder in the hand
Than war has dyed me fighting; the
thing done

Is but for me done, since I hold it so,
Not yet for him that in the doing must
bleed;

I that stand up to do it, and in my
mind

Behold across it mightier days for
deeds,

Should not be way-sick yet nor travel-
tired,

Before I drink fulfilment as a wine;
And here must it restore me.

Enter PARIS.

Ha! so soon?

What news of her?

Paris. The queen commends to you
Her best heart in this letter, and would
know

How yet your purpose toward Craig-
millar bears,

Whether to train him thither by her
hand

Or what choice else.

Bothwell. Say, the device is changed
By counsel and consent of whom she
wots;

Here must they come; James Balfour
and myself

Have waked all night to see things well
begun,

For that bond's sake whereto his hand
was set

With mine here at Craigmillar; all
things now

Stand apt and fit in this his brother's
house

To entertain the kingship of its guest;
We have seen to it, Maitland with us.

Paris. I was sent

From the town hither, finding you set
forth,

But why, folk wist not.

Bothwell. Carry to my queen

This diamond; say too I would send
my heart,

But that she hath already, and no need
To pluck it forth and feel it in her
hand.

Bid her be swift as we have been for
love,

And the more surety quickens our de-
sign:

The rest unsaid shall tarry till she
come.

SCENE XVI. — THE QUEEN'S LODGING
IN GLASGOW.

*The QUEEN in bed; LADY RERES and
PARIS attending.*

Queen. What was his word at part-
ing? let it kiss

Mine ear again.

Paris. Being horsed, he bade me say,
Madam, he would be fain for love of
you

To train a pike all his life-days.

Queen. Please God,

It shall not come to that. Ere this
month die

That has not half a week to live, we
stand

In Edinburgh together. He will go
Without more word or fear; and being
well hence —

How looked my love?

Paris. Madam, as one uplift

To the height of heart and hope, though
full of cares,

And keen in resolution.

Queen. I grow strong

To hear of him. Hath he not heart
enough

To fill with blood a hundred of our
hearts,

Put force and daring, for the fear cast
 out,
 In all our veins made manlike? Prithee,
 Reres,
 Was he thus ever? had he so great
 heart
 In those dead days, such lordliness of
 eye
 To see and smite and burn in master-
 dom,
 Such fire and iron of design and deed
 To serve his purpose and sustain his
 will?
 Hath he not grown, since years that
 knew me not,
 In light and might and speed of spirit
 and stroke
 To lay swift hand upon his thought,
 and turn
 Its cloud to flame, its shadow to true
 shape,
 Its emptiness to fulness? If in sooth
 He was thus always, he should be by
 now
 Hailed the first head of the earth.
Lady Reres. It cannot be
 But in your light he hath waxed, and
 from your love,
 Madam, drawn life and increase; but
 indeed
 His heart seemed ever high and mas-
 terful
 As of a king unkingdomed, and his eye
 As set against the sunrise; such a brow
 As craves a crown to do it right, and
 hand
 Made to hold empire swordlike, and a
 foot
 To tread the topless and unfooted hill
 Whose light is from the morn of
 majesty.
Queen. When mine eye first took
 judgment of his face,
 It read him for a king born; and his
 lips
 Touching my hand for homage had as
 'twere
 Speech without sound in them that
 bowed my heart
 In much more homage to his own.
 Would God
 I could so read now, in that heart I
 serve,

What thought of me moves in it, hear
 what word
 Now hangs upon those lips; if now his
 eye
 Darken or lighten toward mine unseen
 face,
 Or his ear hearken for my speech un-
 heard.
 Why art thou now not with him, and
 again
 Here the same hour to tell me? I
 would have
 More messengers than minutes that
 divide
 Mine eyes from their desire, to bring
 me word,
 With every breath, of every change in
 him,
 If he but rest or rise; nay, might it be,
 Of every thought or heart-beat that
 makes up
 His inner hours of life: yet, by mine
 own,
 If he so loved me, should I know them
 not.
 I will rise now, and pass to see how
 soon
 We may set forth to-morrow.
Lady Reres. Can it be
 He shall have strength? but let your
 highness heed
 That pretext be not given for knaves to
 say
 You had no care to wait on his good
 time,
 But vexed and harried him, being sick,
 with haste
 And timeless heat of travel.
Queen. Fear not you:
 I will make means to bring him in my
 hand
 As a tame hound, and have his thanks
 and love
 For bringing him so wifelike on his way.
 It is the last pain I shall take for him,
 The last work I shall do for marriage-
 sake
 And wifehood well nigh done with duty
 now.
 I have not much more time to serve
 my lord,
 And strife shall fall between us twain
 no more.

SCENE XVII.—DARNLEY'S CHAMBER
IN KIRK OF FIELD.

DARNLEY and NELSON.

Darnley. Thou hast the keys? This house is strange and chill,—
As chill as earth: I have slept no better here.

Those two days that we halted on the way

There at Linlithgow, I could see the haste

That burnt in her to be in Edinburgh, And here being come she sets me in this grange,

And till her chamber be made ready sleeps

In Holyrood apart, and here by day Hath still by her that face I warned her from,

That woman's that I spake of, plays and sings

There in the garden with none else; by God,

I like not aught of it. I am sick again, Sick-hearted, or my will should be a sword

To sunder them. I would I were away. I have ill dreams, man.

Nelson. Please your highness —

Darnley. Ay!
Is majesty gone out of all men's mouths?

Is my state dead before me, even the name

Dead of my place, then?

Nelson. There is come from court Lord Robert Stuart to see your majesty.

Darnley. Let him come in. Robert? he was my friend;

I think he held me dear till David died:

He supped with them that night. I found him once

A quick-souled fellow that would quaff and kiss

The glow of woman's or a wine-cup's mouth,

And laugh as mine own lips that loved the like

Can now no more this long time. Let him come.

Enter ROBERT STUART.

My holy lord of Holyrood-house, good day;

You find a fit man for a ghostly rede.

Robert Stuart. I am glad you have a jest yet; but I come

On graver foot than jesters run, my lord.

Darnley. How, graver than your ghostly name? nay, then

'Tis matter for a grave-side.

Robert Stuart. Sir, it may;

I would be secret with you.

Darnley. What, alone?

Why should we talk alone? what secret? why?

Robert Stuart. I will put off my sword, and give it your man,

If that will ease you.

Darnley. Ease me? what! by God,

You think I fear you come to kill me? Tush,

I am not the fool—and were that all, being thus,

'Faith, you might end me with your naked hands.

Leave us. [*Exit* NELSON.

What is it? you make me not afraid— Sir, I fear no man: what,—for God's sake speak,

I am not moved,—in God's name, let me have it.

Robert Stuart. I came to do you such good service, sir,

As none has done you better, nor can do.

There is an old phrase in men's mouths of one

That stands between the devil and the deep sea;

So now stand you; the man that toward a reef

Drives naked on a thunderstricken wreck

And helmless, hath not half your cause of fear;

The wretch that drops plague-eaten limb from limb

Crumbles to death not half so fast as you:

The grave expects not the new-shrouded man

More surely than your corpse now coffinless.

Darnley. Who put this in your mouth? what enemy?
How have you heart, or whosoe'er he be,
Albeit ye hate me as the worm of hell
Who never harmed you in my hapless days,

To use me so? I am sick —
Robert Stuart. Ay, sick to death,
If you give ear not to me that am come
In very mercy, seeing I called you friend,
For pity's sake to save you, or at least
To stretch your days out for some brief span more
Of life now death-devoted.

Darnley. What, so soon?
God would not have it done, so young I am,—

What have I done that he should give me up?
So comfortless,— who hath no help of man,

They say, hath God's; God help me! for God knows
There is none living hath less help of man.

Nay, and he must, as I have faith in God,
Hang all my hope upon him. For God's sake,

Whence got you this?
Robert Stuart. No matter.

Darnley. At whose hand—
O me, what hand! who is it shall touch me?

Robert Stuart. Hark!
From beneath is heard the QUEEN'S voice, singing.

*Qui se fie
À la vie
A vau-l'eau va vers la mort;
Et que l'onde
Rie ou gronde,
Elle entraîne loin du port.*

Darnley. She sings I know not what,
—a jesting song,
A French court rhyme no graver than a flower,
Fruitless of sense: this is no threat—
a toy—

QUEEN (*from beneath, sings*).

*Sur l'opale
Du flot pâle
Tremble un peu de jour encor;
Sur la plage
Au naufrage
Le haut vent sonne du cor.*

Darnley. What is it she sings now?
Nay, what boots to hear?
I will not hear; speak to me,— pray you, speak.

QUEEN (*from beneath*).

*La mort passe
Comme en chasse,
Et la foudre aboie aux cieux;
L'air frissonne,
La mer tonne,
Le port se dérobe aux yeux.*

*Plus d'étoile
Que ne voile
L'orage âpre au souffle noir;
Pas de brise
Qui ne brise
Quelque vaisseau sans espoir.*

*Noire et nue
Sous la nue,
La nef brisée à moitié
Tourne et vire
Où l'attire
La sombre mer sans pitié.*

*La nuit passe,
Et la chasse
S'est éteinte au fond des cieux;
Mais l'aurore
Pleure encore
Sur les morts qu'ont vus ses yeux.*

*Ce qui tombe
Dans la tombe
Coule et s'en va sans retour;
Quand sous l'ombre
Plonge et combre
Ou la vie ou bien l'amour.*

Robert Stuart. Why do you shake,
and hide your eyes? take heart;
Let fear not be more swift to slay than hate.

Darnley. I said, what hand? you bade me hearken: well, What say you now she sings not?

Robert Stuart. I have said.

Darnley. I will not be your baiting-stock; speak plain: Whence had you word of any plot on me?

Robert Stuart. If you will heed me, well; if not, for me I will take heed yet that it be not ill. Weigh how you will my counsel, I am sure

If my word now lie lightly in your ear It would not lie the heavier for my oath Or any proof's assurance. Whence I had

This word you have of me, I am not bound

To put the knowledge into trust of you Who trust not me in asking.

Darnley. What! I knew

There was no plot but yours to scare me, none,—

Your plot to get my favor, stay yourself

On me as on a staff,—affright me sick With blood-red masks of words and painted plots,

And so take hold upon me afterward Having my strength again and state and power;

A worthy friend and timely.—Nay, but, nay,

I meant not so—I am half distraught — I meant,

I know you for my friend indeed and true:

For one thwart word in sickness cast not off

Your friend that puts his trust in you, your friend

That was nigh mad a minute, being sore sick

And weak, and full of pain and fear, and hath

No friend to help and bear with him if you

Will help nor bear not. By my faith and life,

I do believe you love me, and in love Came, and in faith to me: if I believe not,

God give me death at once and hell to boot.

I pray you pardon.

Robert Stuart. Sir, your faith and life Have neither weight enough to poise an oath

As now they hang in balance. If you will,

Take to your heart my words; if not, be sure

It shall not grieve me though you trust me not,

Who never think to give you counsel more. [Exit.

Darnley. Nay, but one word—how would you have me fly?

He goes, and mocks me. Would my hands had strength

To dig his heart out for my dogs to feed!

He flies, and leaves me weaponless alone

In the eye of peril, coward and false heart—

Should not the tongue be false too? If he came

To affright me only with a fearful face, Blow but a blast of danger in mine ear,

And make my faith as wax that in his breath

Might melt and be re-shapen of his hands—

Nay, I will see the queen, and in her eye

Read if his tongue spake truth, and from her lips

Draw forth his witness; if she mean me ill,

I cannot now but see it. Nelson!— She hath

No trick to keep her from mine instant sight,

Knows not his errand to me; and at once

I take her unawares and catch her soul Naked, her mind plain to me, good or ill.

QUEEN (*sings from below*).

*Lord Love went maying
Where Time was playing,
In light hands weighing
Light hearts with sad;*

*Crowned king with peasant,
Pale past with present,
Harsh hours with pleasant,
Good hopes with bad;
Nor dreamed how fleet
Than Time's swift metre,
O'er all things sweeter
How clothed with power,
The murderess maiden
Mistrust walks laden
With red fruit ruined and dead
white flower.*

Darnley. What sting is in that song
to smite my heart,
And make the blood and breath come
short in me?

O God! I know it — his last year's song
of death:

They struck it on his lips who struck
him through.

Nelson! I will not see her — I will
not die —

Enter the QUEEN.

Queen. I heard your call from under,
and came in —

What ails you, sir? why stare you thus
askance?

Darnley. I had a pang of sickness
that passed by
While you were singing.

Queen. Is my brother gone?

Darnley. There was none here —
Your brother? what, the earl?
Doth not his wife lie at St. Andrew's
sick,

Where he is gone to visit her?

Queen. For love,

Why will you lie to me in jest? you
know

Here was my brother Robert.

Darnley. Ay, but now —

I did not say he was not here but now.

Queen. Has he not moved you?

Darnley. Why should I be moved?

I am not lightly shaken of men's breath;
What think you that he came to move
me for?

Queen. In faith, I guess not.

Darnley. Nay, though I be weak,
I am no need yet for him to blow and
make

What music of me shall best please his
mouth.

Queen. I think you are not, but for
all winds blown
Of fears and threats fixed and un-
shakable.

What said he to you that has moved
you not?

Darnley. Nothing.

Queen. What! you were moved then
of his words?

Darnley. I say I was not.

Queen. He said nothing, then?

You held discourse but of days foul or
fair,
Skies wet or dry, seasons and acci-
dents,

All things and nothing?

Darnley. Would you not know that?

Queen. Even as you list or list not,
so would I.

Darnley. What if it please me you
should know this not?

Queen. Why, you do wisely, seeing I
love you not.

Darnley. I did not say so; I may
hold my peace,

Yet not for doubt that irks me of your
love.

Queen. Surely you may; good rea-
sons may stand thick
As buds in April, in your judgment's
sight,

To cover both your counsels from mine
eye

That has no lust to invade your secre-
cies.

Darnley. And if it please me show
it, as now it shall,

You will not dread I doubt your love
of me.

Queen. I have not heart to dread
the doubt I know

You have not heart to harbor of my
love.

Darnley. Why, he came here to warn
me of my life.

Queen. Your life?

Darnley. Ay, mine; and what now
say you to him?

Queen. I say he spake as your good
friend and mine.

Darnley. Ay?

Queen. What more kindness could
be shown of man

Than in your ear to warn me of your
 life
 If it so stand in peril?
Darnley. What! you think
 He told it me to have me tell it you?
Queen. It was done gently, brother-
 like, for fear
 The word of danger being first heard
 by me
 Should strike too sharp upon my slight-
 er soul,
 And pierce my woman's sense with
 such quick pangs
 As might dethrone my judgment, shake
 my wits
 To feminine confusion, and by force
 Disable my swift thoughts, now maimed
 with dread,
 From their defence and office: he did
 well,
 And my heart thanks him, showing you
 first his fear,
 Who are manlike of your mood and
 mould of mind,
 And have but for your own life to take
 thought,
 Not for one dearer; as, I know you
 well,
 By mine own heart I know, to have
 heard of me
 Endangered would have killed your
 heart with fear,
 That in your personal peril beats at
 ease
 With blood as perfect as I see you now,
 With pulse thus changeless, and with
 cheek thus calm.
 Indeed I thank him for it, and twice I
 thank,
 That he would serve you, and would
 scare not me.
 Where said he was this danger?
Darnley. Nay, by God,
 That would he not say; that I nothing
 know;
 Save by some hint of shoulder or
 writhed lip
 That seemed to shoot at you; and when
 you sang
 He bade me hearken, and would speak
 no more.
Queen. At me! but if such fire be on
 his tongue,

It should be forked, and set on fire of
 hell.
 At me! but if he be not mad, to you
 He shall approve it, instant face to
 face,
 Eye to confronted eye, word against
 word,
 He shall maintain or mark himself for
 liar,—
 With his own fire and iron brand the
 brow
 That burned not to belie me.
Darnley. Sweet, not here:
 Would I could fight with him! but he-
 ing o'erthrown
 Of my disease already, to what end
 Should he come back now, save to in-
 sult on me
 Who have no hand to strike at him
 again
 In championship of you?
Queen. He shall come back,
 And twice shall oversay the word he
 said
 In your own ear, or else unswear it.
 What!
 Shall I be put to shame of mine own
 blood,
 To mine own lord in mine own love
 maligned,
 Stricken with slanderous fangs of
 speech, and stabbed
 In my heart's core of honor, yet lie
 still
 And bled to death dumb and dishon-
 orable?
 Rather let come the deadliest of my
 kin,
 Mine enemies born, and bind and burn
 me quick,
 Or ever I die thus; rather let all
 The false blood of my father in strange
 veins
 Be set on fire against me, and its heat
 Consume my fame with my frail flesh,
 and make
 My scaffold of my kingdom; rather
 fall
 My naked head beneath the mortal
 axe,
 And with my blood my name be spilt
 and shed,
 Than this charge come upon me.

Darnley. You are stirred
Beyond all right of reason; be not
moved:

You see how I believed him.

Queen. And to see
Is my soul's comfort; but this wound
that bleeds

Here in my heart's heart cannot well
be stanch'd

Till by the tongue that smote me, as
men say

That by the anointing of the sword
that hurt

The wound it made finds comfort, I be
healed.

Darnley. Nay, let him come; I will
maintain it to him:

Here, to his face, he warn'd me of my
death

Or present danger in you.

Queen. He shall come.

But lie now down, and sleep; I have
wearied you.

Darnley. I pray you sing me some-
thing then; indeed

I am weary and would forget; but now
you sang—

Doth that French song break where
you broke it off?

Queen. No, there is more. Sleep, I
will sing it you. [Sings.

*Sur la grève
Rien ne rêve
Aux naufragés de la nuit;
À la trombe,
Gouffre et tombe,
Au flot qui frappe et qui fuit.*

*Apaisée
Et baïsée
Par les brises sans souci,
Brille et vibre
Au jour libre
La belle mer sans merci.*

*Tant que dure
La nuit dure
Sur la grève où rit la mort,
Sous l'orage
Flotte et nage
Le jour qui lutte et qui sort.*

*Pas de brume
Que n'allume
L'astre ou l'éclair des amours;
Pas de flamme
Qui dans l'âme
Brûle ou luit tous les jours.*

*À l'aurore
Tout se dore,
Tout se fane avant la nuit;
Et que l'heure
Chante ou pleure,
Dans une heure tout s'enfuit.*

*Cœur sans crainte,
Ciel sans feinte,
Quand l'amour met voile au vent,
Sur la plage
Sans naufrage
Est-il revenu souvent?*

*L'ombre emporte
La nef morte,
Et la joie, et le beau jour;
Trop profonde
Était l'onde.
Et trop faible était l'amour.*
[The scene closes.

SCENE XVIII.—BEHIND KIRK OF
FIELD.

BOTHWELL, ORMISTON, HEPBURN of
BOLTON, and HAY of TALLA.

Bothwell. If it be done to-morrow,
we shall stand

The surer that the queen slept here to-
night.

Cousin, bring you my knaves from
Holyrood

At nightfall to that hinder gate where-
through

We three shall give you passage with
your charge

To the strait garden-plat beyond the
walls

Whereto the door that opens from be-
neath

Shall stand unbolted, and you entering
spread

Along the blind floor of the nether vault
The train that shall set all these walls
on wing.

Ormiston. How said you, that his
groom here had the keys?

Bothwell. That under door which
lets us down lacks none:

There is no lock to palter with: it
needs

But leave the bolt undrawn; and yes-
terday

By the queen's order was the door re-
moved

At bottom of the stair, to be instead
A cover for his bath-vat; so there
stands

But the main door now.

Hepburn. That was well devised:
She sleeps beneath his chamber here
to-night?

Bothwell. Ay, to the west.

Fay. She has the stouter heart.
I have trod as deep in the red wash
o' the wars

As who walks reddest, yet I could not
sleep,

I doubt, with next night's dead man
overhead.

Bothwell. We are past the season of
divided wills;

Where but one thought is, nothing to
be done

Has power to hurt the heart that holds
it fast,

Or leave the purpose weaker by a
wound

Given it of doubt or after-thought: we
have

One thing to do, one eye to see it, one
hand

To pluck it from the occasion; what
he wills

None but a fool would mix his will to
achieve

With pain and fear; the mind once
shaped and set

That works, and yet looks back and
weeps to do,

Is but half man's; and all a man's hath
she.

Hepburn. Yet woman moulded out-
ward, clothed upon

As 'twere with feminine raiment, touched
with thoughts

Of female-colored fashion, woman's
craft:

She sees and thinks on what could
touch not us,

Nor graze in passing even our skirts of
sense:

Takes order for the hangings of his
bed

Whom we must kill to her hand, lest
water soil

The sable velvet from his bath, and
bids

Pluck down and save them; such slight
things and strange

As take the thought and hold the eye of
girls,

Her soul, as full of great things as it is,
As large and fiery, bright and passion-
ate,

Takes no less thought for, and hath
heed of these

No less than of high deed and deep
desire

Beyond where sight can scale or thought
can dive

Of narrower eye and shallower spirit
than hers.

Bothwell. Most royal is she, but of
soul not all

Uncurbable, nor of all shafts that fly
Scathless, nor of all shots invulner-
able;

She had no part else and no power
in us,

No part in all that mingling makes up
man,

No power upon our earth who are
earthlier made;

She has the more might on men's ways
of soul

Not being almighty, nor from all man's
moods

Divided, but as passion-touched and
mixed

With all such moods as men are; nay,
not these,

But such as bear the rule of these, and
lead

Which way they will — women's; and
being so mixed

She is even the more entire, more whole
and strong,

Herself and no self other. She nor I
Live now on thoughts and words; the
deed it is,

Our deed alone we live by, till being
done

It leave us time for life that deals with
these.

I will be with you ere night fall again
Within the town-wall; thither get you
now,

And doubt not of us.

Ormiston. Doubt not you to find
All ready by the night and need: fare-
well.

[*Exeunt all but BOTHWELL.*

Bothwell. The time is breathless;
earth sees heaven as chill
In the after air declining from high
day.

I would the winds would muster, or the
sun
Show half an eye-blink of his face that
hangs

Now downward to the sea, curbed in
with cloud,

And with a brief breath fire the rack
that flies.

Why should not flame break over
Arthur's Seat

This hour, and all the heaven with
burning tongues

Cry from the world's height to the under
line

That ends it for us gazing? If the sky
Had speech as it hath fire, or night
or day

Voice to declare God's pleasure or his
wrath

With their dumb lips of light, from
moon or sun

Or the mute mouths of stars, would
earth that heard

Take thought and counsel of the cause,
to stir

Men's hearts up for our deed's sake
here? I am wrought

Out of myself even by this pause and
peace

In heaven and earth, that will not know
of us

Nor what we compass; in this face of
things,

Here in this eye of ever-during life
That changes not in changing, fear and
hope,

The life we live, the life we take, alike

Decline and dwindle from the shape
they held,

Their import and significance: all seem
Less good and evil, worth less hate and
love,

Than we would have them for our high
heart's sake.

How shall this day, when all these days
are done,

Seem to me standing where it sets my
feet?

Nay, whence shall I behold it? or who
knows

What crest or chasm, what pit or pin-
nacle,

Shall feel my foot or gulf my body
down,

Bear up or break me falling? Fall or
stand,

At least I live not as the beasts that
serve,

But with a king's life or man's death at
last

Make all my travails perfect; and a
queen,

The fairest face I have loved and fier-
est heart,

Shines with my star or sets.

Enter PARIS.

What sends she now?

Paris. I came to know if you stand
fixed indeed,

Sir, for to-morrow.

Bothwell. For to-morrow, man;

What ails him at to-morrow?

Paris. My dread lord,

Naught ails me but as part of your
design;

But I beseech you by your trust of me,
What says this while my lord of Mur-
ray?

Bothwell. He!

He will nor help nor hinder—but a!!'s
one.

Paris. He is wise.

Bothwell. But is it to tell me he is
wise

That you bestow your own wise tongue
on me?

Came you to advise me or to show my
trust

How cracked a casket I have closed
it in

Who trusted in so white a heart as yours?

Paris. I have a message —

Bothwell. Well, the message, then:
And as you are wise, make me not
wroth to-day,
Who am but foolish.

Paris. Sir, the queen by me
Wills you to know that from her hus-
band's mouth

She is assured there came here yester-
day

To him her brother, Abbot of St. Cross,
To warn him of some danger.

Bothwell. From his mouth!
Had ever mouth such hunger to eat
dust?

Well, it shall soon be filled and shut.
What else?

Paris. She has taxed hereof her
brother —

Bothwell. What, by word?

Paris. No, but by note she let him
wist she knew it.

Now he denies again his word aloud —

Bothwell. He does the wiselier; there
your tongue struck right;

She has wise men to brethren.

Paris. And desires

To prove it on the accuser's body, being
Once whole again to meet him.

Bothwell. A fair proof:

Doth either sword seek mine for sec-
ond?

Paris. Nay;

But the queen bade me tell you he
should go

To her lord's chamber for his challenge'
sake,

And do that thing ye wot of.

Bothwell. Tell the queen

I will speak to him. We must not mar
our hand;

Say will I see him before the morrow
morn.

Howbeit, it shall be well but for a
night

To put our present purpose back, and
see

If chance or craft will mend our hand
again.

Who strikes most sure strikes deepest.
Say I go

To try this brother's edge; if he be
sure,

He shall well serve us as a glove to
wear

And strike, and have the whiter hands
to show.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE XIX. — DARNLEY'S CHAMBER.

DARNLEY and NELSON.

Darnley. I never had such evil
dreams as now.

Save for the terror of them and after
pain,

I durst well swear I had not slept to-
night.

Nelson. You have slept seven hours.

Darnley. I have been seven years in
hell:

Mine eyes are full yet of the flames, my
flesh

Feels creep the fire upon it; even my
heart

Is as a sere leaf shrunken.

Nelson. Being awake,

Let not it move you.

Darnley. Nay, it shall not move.
Yet were they dreams to shake with
waking fear

A sounder state than mine is.

Nelson. Sir, what dreams?

Darnley. No matter what: I'll tell
thee yet some part,

That thou may'st know I shrink not for
no cause.

I dreamed this bed here was a boat
adrift

Wherein one sat with me who played
and sang,

Yet of his cittern I could hear no note
Nor in what speech he sang inaudibly,

But watched his working fingers and
quick lips

As with a passionate and loathing fear,
And could not speak nor smite him;

and methought
That this was David; and he knew my
heart,

How fain I would have smitten him,
and laughed

As 'twere to mock my helpless hands
and hate.

Darnley. I am not bound to swear it
or unswear
At any bidding; but so much I will —
That you may see no hot foul words of
yours
Have quenched in me the old thought
of fellowship —
As swear again I said but what I might
With honor and clear heart: I spake
no word
To bring you in suspicion, or to turn
Thwart eyes upon you of men's jeal-
ousies,
Or cast you out of favor with the queen;
I said but you did warn me of my life,
As being my fast friend still, I thanked
you for it.
I know not what she says I said, but
this
I know: I spake no treason of you.
See,
This is a foolish wind of wrath that
shakes
And wrecks your faith in me, mine own
in you
Being firm and flawless; what you have
said, you have said;
And what I have spoken of you was no
more
Than I had right to speak, and rest
your friend.
Robert Stuart. Will you fight with
me to maintain so much?
Darnley. If I might rise, I would put
off my state
To stand against you equal; you did
say it,
That I was even as one the law damns
dead,
And she was parcel of my peril.
Robert Stuart. Ay!
You said so to her?
Darnley. She will not say I did.
Robert Stuart. Plight not your faith
to that: I am assured
You said so, and so lied; and this last
time
I bind you yet to meet me on this cause,
Or bear the lie about you as a badge.
Darnley. By God, I will grow strong
to fight with you.
Robert Stuart. If I shall see your
living face again,

It shall be as mine enemy's; foot to
foot
And hand to mortal hand we twain will
meet,
Or ere the day dawn I shall see you
dead.
Darnley. I am like to die, then? and
your warlike words
Have so much iron in them, and your
heart
Such daring to provoke one well-nigh
dead?
I wist your tongue would move more
tenderly
If I had now my strength of natural
hand
And body to bear arms: but these shall
come,
And you change face, and lower your
look to see.
Robert Stuart. I will abide my peril:
do you the like,
You shall do wisely; should I say fare-
well,
It were to bid you fare not as they do
Who are of your kind or of your for-
tune; yet
I bid you, sir, fare better than I think.
[Exit.
Darnley. Ay, you think venomously.
What hour to-day
Should the queen come?
Nelson. To-night your highness knows
Her man Sebastian weds a maid of
hers,
And she makes feast for them in Hoiy-
rood
With masque and music; having early
supped,
She will be here somewhile with certain
lords
To visit you, and so pass back ere night.
Darnley. She shall not make so
much, when I am revived,
Of outland folk and fiddlers, who
should have
Too much of them by this. I would
she had come
To see me turn the lie back on his lips.
I did not answer as I might, being
whole,
But yet not like a sick man, ha? like
one

Whose wit and heart lie sick too with his flesh?

Nelson. Nay, with your natural spirit of speech you spoke, With the same heart and tongue you have in health.

Darnley. I think I did; I would she had come betimes.

SCENE XX.—THE GARDEN BEHIND KIRK OF FIELD.

BOTHWELL, ORMISTON, HAY.

Bothwell. Did I not bid them spare no speed? the devil I think has maimed their feet in my despite,

To keep a knave so piteous out of hell. By God, it will be moonrise ere they come.

Ormiston. Tush, man! the night is close.

Bothwell. Ay, close and safe As is the lock of a girl's maidenhood When the gold key turns in it. They halt like jades; God plague their laggard limbs with goads of fire!

Must they fall spavined now?

Hay. Here come they three, And with charged hands; be not so outward hot, But as their charge is ere we give it fire.

Bothwell. Teach your own tongue to take your tune, not mine.

Enter HEPBURN with Servants.

Have you some devil's cramp in your bones, to crawl At this worm's race? Set down your load, and go.

[Exeunt Servants.]

What lamed these knaves' feet or belated you, To hold us here thus till the moon were up?

Hepburn. 'Tis not yet risen; and your own word it was

Withheld us till the west should cast off red.

Bothwell. Well, we have time. Ye three are hands enough

To bear this down, and strew it within the vault,

While I go help the queen here bide her hour

Till you send Paris to me for a sign. Take heed there be no noise. Let but two stay

To fire the train; you, cousin, for my love Shall be one hand thereto. Pass in, and see

Ye go down sure and softly. From this gate

Ye know the passage under; go, and speed.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE XXI.—DARNLEY'S CHAMBER.

The QUEEN, DARNLEY, *Earls of CASSILIS, HUNTLEY, and ARGYLE.*

Queen. But I must chide you for one thing, my lord, That you would hold your servant Duram here

Though it be for love you bear him; he is sick, And should not sleep nor watch with you to-night.

You do not well to keep him from the town

Against his health, who should take physic there, And come back whole to serve you.

Darnley. Let him go.

I did but bid him leave me not alone; I will have one for service at my hand.

Queen. Have you no more but just this young man gone Whom I bade go even where was best for him?

Let your page lie at hand here.

Darnley. Nay, I will.

You sent off Alexander?

Queen. He was sick;

We should show care of them we take to grace

More friendlike than by cherishing ourselves

With their forced company; the grace is more

To take thought for them whom we hold in trust

Than still to exact their service, tax
their faith,
Whose faith and service we that lean
thereon
Should put to no more toil and pain
than needs,
Requiting love with labor.

Darnley. You say well:
But what should ail him? save that
yesterday
He found his bed-straw here by chance
afire,

And flung it out at window; on which
plea

He would not lie to-night here, till I
bade him

Sleep with me as aforetime, being of
all

The man bound closest to my love and
trust;

Then first he spake of sickness, as you
heard

Who sat between us. Nay, but let
him go;

The boy shall serve to sleep here.

Queen. Sickness makes
All wills to serve it like necessity:

Witness my will to keep my brother
here

Whom his wife's sickness at St. An-
drew's now

Parts from our feasts and counsels,
caught up hence

As if a wind had rapt him.

Darnley. She is sick too,—
The lady Murray?

Queen. Nigh to death, he says;
I know not: who knows how near
death he walks

Who treads as now most upright in the
sun?

Argyle. Why have we death and
sickness in our mouths,

Who come forth of a feast not ended
yet

That in good time recalls us?

Queen. Presently.

I would you were in health to dance
me down

To-night but for the bride's sake; for
the groom,

He may live easier that you grace him
not,

Not gall with favor or with jealousy.

Darnley. We twain shall see this
night out otherwise.

Queen. I am sure you shall see more
of rest than I.

Darnley. Except I watch for sick-
ness' sake all night.

Queen. That shall you not; I charge
you on my love
Sleep sound for my sake.

Enter BOTHWELL.

Are not you the bell
That strikes the hour to sunder us, my
lord?

Bothwell. Madam, I strike not yet.

Queen. The better: sit,
And make no sound of parting till your
hour,

No timeless note of severance. My
fair lord,

Have you no fair word for your noble
guests?

Darnley. I pray you, sirs, of your
own gentleness,

Lay it not to my discourtesy for shame
That I can but thus sickly entertain

The grace ye do me; that I meet it so,
Impute not to my will that is myself,

But to my weakness that is none of me
Save as our enemy may be part of us,
And so forgive it.

Huntley. Sir, we are fain to see,
Even in your gracious words that speak
you ill,

Some spirit of health already.

Cassilis. I would pledge
My name and word you shall not long
lie sick,

Who bear yourself thus lordlike.

[*Noise below.*]

Queen. Ah! my heart—
It wrings me here in passing; pardon
me.

Bothwell. God's lightning burn them!
will they mar me now?

[*Aside, and exit.*]

Darnley. Heard you no noise?

Argyle. Where?

Queen. Some one stirred below;
A chair thrown down or such-like.

Darnley. Nay, I caught

A rush and rattle as—

Cassilis. Of pebble-stones?

Darnley. Where is my lord gone forth?

Queen. Why are you moved?

Darnley. I am not moved: I am no fearful fool

To shake and whiten as a winter tree
With no more wind than this is.

Queen. Do you think
It is your counsellor come back in
wrath

To warn again and threaten?

Darnley. Nay, for him

I think he hath learnt a lesson of my
rede

To vex his soul and trouble me no
more.

Re-enter BOTHWELL.

Queen. What deadly news now of
what danger, sir?

Bothwell. Some fellow bearing fag-
ots for the fire

Slipt at the threshold: I have admon-
ished him

What din his knaveship made even in
our ears

As if he had the devil there in his hands.

Queen (aside). It was of them?

Bothwell (aside). Ay, hell take hold
on them!

It was their din, God thank them for it
with fire,

Our careful helpers; but I have made
them safe:

The train is well-nigh laid now: what
remains

To strew, I have charged them shed
without more sound

Than where the snow strikes.

Darnley. Must you part indeed?

Queen. They look for us ere long.

Darnley. Now know I not

What I would give to hold you here a
night:

Even half my life, I think, and know not
why.

Queen. That were too much. I slept
here yesterday;

Were you the better for me?

Darnley. Ay, and no;

I deemed I was the better till I slept,
And then —

Queen. Why, did my being here break
your sleep?

It shall not break to-night then.

Enter PARIS, and stands at the door.

Bothwell (aside to ARGYLE). Time is
come;

Touch him, and give the sign.

Darnley. The air turns sharp;

There came a wind as chill as from the
pit.

Why do you fix your eyes so fast on
me?

Queen. Not out of mind to mar your
sleep again.

Darnley. I will not sleep alone.

Queen. Ay, will you not?

The town looks like a smoke whose
flame is out,

Deformed of night, defaced and fea-
tureless,

Dull as the dead fume of a fallen fire.

There starts out of the cloud a climb-
ing star,

And there is caught and slain.

Darnley. Why gaze you so?

Queen. I looked to see if there should
rise again

Out of its timeless grave the mounting
light

That so was overtaken. We must part;
Keep with this kiss this ring again for
me

Till I shall ask it of you; and good
night.

Darnley. A good night it may be to
folk that feast;

I see not how it shall be good to me.

Queen. It may be better. I must be
some hour

Again among the masquers: you that
sleep

Shall hear no noise and see no com-
pany.

Enter NELSON.

For this one night here comes your
chamberlain:

Good rest with you. 'Twas just this
time last year

David was slain.

Darnley. Why tell you me of that?

Queen. This very time as now. Good
night, my lord.

[*Excunt all but DARNLEY and NELSON.*

Darnley. What folk remain by me?

Nelson. Sir, four of us:

Myself and Seymour, Taylor and his boy.

Darnley. Let Taylor sleep here in my room to-night, You three in the south gallery.

Nelson. Well, my lord.

Darnley. I am left here very lonely. She was kind, Most kind she was; but what should make her speak

Of David's slaying?

Nelson. A word that shot by chance; A shaft of thought that grazed her and flew by.

Darnley. Why should she tell me of it? My heart runs low;

As if my blood beat out of tune with life,

I feel the veins shuddering shrink in, and all

My body seems a burden to my soul.

Come, I will think not that way.

Re-enter PARIS.

Paris. Sir, the queen, Having forgot for haste in parting hence Her outer cloak of fur, hath sent me for it,

Lest this night's weather strike her blood a-cold.

Darnley. Take it, and go.

[Exit PARIS.]

I do not like their eyes, These foreign folk's that serve her. Is it cold?

I feel cold here.

Nelson. A fair sharp night, my lord; And the air less cumbered than it was with cloud.

Darnley. I find no night of all nights fair to me:

I am sick here at my heart all the dark hours.

Give me the book there. Ay, my book of psalms?

What day is this?

Nelson. The ninth of February.

Darnley. How says it of God's foes, they were afraid

Where no fear was? That am not I: my fear

Dies without food. I am not as were these.

I prithee tell me, of thine honest heart,

Think'st thou I have no cause to feed my fear,

Or keep the bitter life in it alive?

Nelson. I know not, sir; but what you give it of food

Is so much taken from your health of heart

That goes to starve your spirit of likely life.

Darnley. Why, then I will not feed it with false thoughts.

Call here my chamber-fellow. If the heart

Enter TAYLOR.

Be but the servant of chance cold and heat,

And the brain bear not rule upon the blood,

We are beasts who call us men. Thomas, good night.

[Exit NELSON.]

What, shall we watch a while?

Taylor. So please your grace.

Darnley. I have more mind to sleep than power to sleep:

Some unrest in me fights against my rest.

Come hither, Will. Of all thy fellows here,

I think thou lov'st me; fain am I to think.

I would not live unloved of all men born;

I hope I shall not. Dost thou feel to-night

Thy living blood and spirit at ease in thee?

Taylor. Surely, my lord.

Darnley. I would thy lord did too.

This is a bitter writing where he saith How in his prayer he mourns, and hath his heart

Disquieted within him; and again, The fear of death is fallen upon him,

see, And fearfulness and trembling, as is writ,

Are come upon him, and an horrible dread

Hath him o'erwhelmed: Oh that I had, saith he,

Wings like a dove! then would I flee away,

And be at rest; would get me then far
off,
And bide within the wilderness, it
saith;
I would make haste to escape. Lo, here
am I,
That bide as in a wilderness indeed,
And have not wings to bear me forth
of fear.
Nor is it an open enemy, he saith,
Hath done me this dishonor (what hath
put
This deadly scripture in mine eye to-
night?)
For then I could have borne it; but it
was
Even thou, mine own familiar friend,
with whom
I took sweet counsel; in the house of
God
We walked as friends. Ay, in God's
house it was
That we joined hands, even she my wife
and I,
Who took but now sweet counsel mouth
to mouth,
And kissed as friends together.
Wouldst thou think,
She set this ring at parting on my
hand
And to my lips her lips? and then she
spake
Words of that last year's slaughter. O
God, God!
I know not if it be not of thy will
My heart begins to pass into her
heart,
Mine eye to read within her eye, and
find
Therein a deadlier scripture. Must it
be
That I so late should waken, and so
young
Die? for I wake as out of sleep to
death.
Is there no hand or heart on earth to
help?
Mother! my mother! hast thou heart
nor hand
To save thy son, to take me hence
away
Far off, and hide me? But I was thy
son,

That lay between thy breasts and drank
of thee,
And I thy son it is they seek to slay.
My God, my God! how shall they mur-
der me?
Taylor. I pray you, comfort your own
heart, my lord:
Your passion drives your manhood out
of you.
Darnley. I know it doth: I am hare-
hearted, for
The hunters are upon me. There—
and there—
I hear them questing. I shall die, man,
—die,
And never see the sun more; ay, this
hour
Will they come in and slay me. O
great God,
Sweet Jesus! will you have me die this
death,
Such death as never man before has
died?
See how they will not let me pray to
you,
To take my soul out of their fangs and
hell!
Will you not make the sun rise for my
sake,
That I may see you in the dawn, and
live,
And know the grace that God hath ere
I die?
Taylor. Sir, for God's love—
Darnley. I say I hear their feet.
Thou hast no ears—God hath no ears
for me,
Nor eyes to look upon me; hands he
hath,—
Their bloody hands to smite with, and
her heart
Is his toward me to slay me. Let them
come.
How do men die? but I so trapped
alive,—
Oh, I shall die a dog's death and no
man's.
Mary, by Christ whose mother's was
your name,
Slay me not! God, turn off from me
that heart,—
Out of her hands, God, God, deliver
me!

ACT III.—JANE GORDON.

Time: from February 10 to June 11, 1567.

SCENE I.—BOTHWELL'S APARTMENT
IN HOLYROOD.

BOTHWELL, ORMISTON, HEPBURN OF
BOLTON, and other Gentlemen.

Bothwell. Is my knave sent for to me
from the queen?

Hepburn. Ay, my good lord.

Bothwell. I had happier thoughts of
him,

Who served us but unhappily last night:
This Paris had been faithful, and his
tongue,

That might have struck a sting into my
fame,

Had done me loyal service, and let fly
No word to bring me in disgrace of men
When I stood friendless; for which
cause ye know

I gave him place with the queen's
chamberlains

And promise of more furtherance; but
this thing

Has turned his six years' service into
dust,

And made his faith as running water
slip

Between my hands that held it for a
staff;

For, since I first brake with him of the
deed,

He hath been for fear besotted like
a beast.

Ormiston. 'Faith, he was heavy
enough of cheer last night

When you came forth, and the queen
parted thence

And hither to the bridal.

Bothwell. By this hand,
I came upon him glooming and with-
drawn

Up in a nook with face as of one
hanged,

And asked what ailed him to put on
that gloom

Or make such countenance there before
the queen?

And I would handle him in such sort, I
said,

As he was never in his life,— by God,
I had the mind to do it,— and he, *My
lord,*

I care not what thing now ye do to me,
And craved he might get thence to bed,
as sick,

But that I would not: then, as ye twain
saw,

When came the wind and thunder of
the blast

That blew the fool forth who took wing
for death,

Down my knave drops me flatlong, with
his hair

Aghast as hedgehogs' prickles, and,
Alas,

*My lord! what thing is this? and He
had seen*

*Great enterprises, marry, and many of
them,*

*But never one that scared him so as
this;*

*And such a thing would never have good
end,*

And I should see it. By God, I had a
will

To have set my dagger here into him,
but yet

I drew it not forth.

Ormiston. I doubt you did not well:
'Tis of such stuff that time makes tale-
bearers.

Bothwell. I would not strike him for
old service' sake,

Were he more dangerous to me; but,
God help,

What hurt here can he do us? I tell
you, sirs,

I think my star that was not swift to
rise,

But hung this long time strangled in
dead cloud,

Is even by this a fire in heaven, and
hath

The heat and light in it of this dead
man's

That it hath drunk up as a dewdrop
drawn

Into the red mid-heat of its own heart;
And ye that walk by light of it shall
stand

With morning on the footless mountain-tops
Crowned.

Hepburn. There are crags yet slippery to be clomb,
And scaurs to rend their knees and feet
who rise.

Bothwell. I have my hand here on
the throat of time,
And hold mine hour of fortune by the
hair.

Had I let slip this season, I had fallen
Naked and sheer to break myself on
death,

A cragsman crushed at the cliff's foot;
but now

Chance cannot trip me, if I look not
down

And let mine eye swim back among
slain fears

To reckon up dead dangers; but I
look

High up as is the light, higher than
your eyes,

Beyond all eagles' aeries, to the sun.

Ormiston. You will be king?

Bothwell. Was I not crowned last
night?

The hand that gave those dead stones
wings to fly

Gave wings too to my fortune, and the
fire

That sprang then in our faces, on my
head

Was as the gold forefigured on a king's.
Enter PARIS.

What says the queen? why shak'st thou
like a cur?

Speak, beast, or beastlike shalt thou
fare with me:

Has thou not seen her?

Paris. Ay, my lord.

Bothwell. Ay, dog?

What said she to those gaping eyes of
thine?

Paris. My lord, I found her in her
mourning bed

New-hung with black; her looks were
fresh and staid:

Her fast being broken only with an
egg,

Ere she addressed herself again to
sleep

She spake but three words with me of
yourself,

How might you fare, and when she rose
by noon

You should come to her: no more.

Bothwell. So let her sleep;
There are that watch for her. For
thine own part,

I charge thee, tell me one thing: in thy
life

Didst thou pledge ever promise, or
plight faith,

To that dead mask of kingship?

Paris. Nay, my lord.

Bothwell. Seest thou not now these
gentlemen my friends?

Not one of them but for troth's sake to
me

And loving service hath cast all things
off

To do as I shall and to fare as I;
And if thou think'st, whom no faith
bound nor love

To serve that fool, or come 'twixt hell
and him

To buckler him from burning, — if thou
think'st,

That art my servant, thou hast sinned
toward God

In our offence, this lies not to thy
charge,

But mine who caused thee do it, and
all the lords'

Who with me took this work in all
their hands.

And if now thou have will to go thy
way,

Thou shalt depart right soon with rec-
ompense;

But for all pains that can be put to thee
Thou must not take this on thy tongue
again.

Paris. My lord, I will not.

Bothwell. Sirs, with me it rests
To take some order for the burial soon.

When the queen's eye hath dwelt upon
him dead, —

As shall be, lest men say for shame or
fear

She would not see him, — then with all
privy speed

He shall by night be given here to the
worms.

His raiment and his horses will I take
 By the queen's gift; for, being now
 highest in place,
 I will present me kinglike to the time,
 And come before men royal, who shall
 know
 I stand here where he stood in all their
 sight;
 So, seeing at once if I be lord or no,
 He that shall hate me risen shall need
 take heart
 To strike betimes, or strike not. At
 this hour
 Bold heart, swift hand, are wiser than
 wise brain.
 I must be seen of all men's fear or hate,
 And as I am seen must see them, and
 smite down,
 Or lie forever naked underfoot
 Down in the dark for them to triumph
 on.
 That will I not; but who shall over-
 throw
 Must kill me kingly, sworded hand to
 hand,
 Not snared with gin or lime-twig as a
 fool,
 Nor hurled by night up howling into
 heaven,
 But in the sun's eye weaponed. Some
 of you
 Go forth, and find what noise is in the
 streets,
 What rumors, and how tempered, on
 men's tongues:
 When I pass out among them, I will
 take
 Some fifty with me to my guard, and
 ride
 As might their king ride. Be it pro-
 claimed abroad,
 In mine own name and Maitland's and
 Argyle's,
 Two thousand pounds shall pay that
 good man's pains
 Who shall produce the murderers of
 our king
 For just and sudden judgment. In few
 days,
 If Mar be not mine unfriend and his
 own,
 Who holds the keys of Stirling, we
 shall pass

With some of counsel thither, and
 there bide
 Till the first reek of rumor have blown
 by,
 Then call in spring our parliament
 again.
Hepburn. Your heart of hope is
 great: with God to friend,
 A man could speed no better than your
 hope.
Bothwell. I tell thee, God is in that
 man's right hand
 Whose heart knows when to strike and
 when to stay.
 I swear I would not ask more hope
 of heaven
 Than of mine own heart which puts fire
 to me,
 And of mine own eye which discerns
 my day.
 And, seeing the hope wherein I go now
 forth
 Is of their giving, if I live or die,
 With God to friend or unfriend, quick
 or dead
 I shall not wake nor sleep with them
 that fear,
 Whose lives are as leaves wavering in
 a wind,
 But as a man foiled or a man en-
 throned
 That was not fooled of fortune nor of
 fear. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II. — ANOTHER ROOM IN THE
 SAME.

*The body of DARNLEY lying on a bier.
 Two men in attendance.*

First Attendant. There is no wound.
Second Attendant. Nor hath the fire
 caught here;
 This gown about him is not singed; his
 face
 Is clinched together, but on hair nor
 cheek
 Has flame laid even a finger; each limb
 whole,
 And nothing of him shattered but the
 life.
 How comes he dead?
First Attendant. Tush, tush! he died
 by chance.

Take thou no pain to know it. For mine own mind,
 I think it was his sickness which being full
 Broke as a plague-spot breaks, and shattered him,
 And, with his fleshly house, the house of stone
 Which held him dying: his malady it was
 That burst the walls in sunder, and sent up
 A ruin of flaming roofs and floors afire.
Second Attendant. Was not his chamber-fellow's corpse as his?
First Attendant. Ay, woundless as they say, and unconsumed;
 I know not surely. But the blast that made
 The good town ring and rock here through her streets
 Shook not all sleepers in the house to death:
 Three souls have crept forth of the wreck alive
 That slept without his chamber.
Second Attendant. What say these?
First Attendant. What should they say, with thanks for their own hap,
 But that this chance is dire, and this man dead?
 There is no more yet for sage lips to say,
 That would not timeless be stopped up with earth.
Enter the QUEEN and BOTHWELL.
Queen. Leave us, and after take your charge again.
First Attendant. We must forbear her till her moan be made. (*Aside.*)
[Exeunt Attendants.]
Queen. Let me look on him. It is marred not much;
 This was a fair face of a boy's alive.
Bothwell. It had been better had he died ere man.
Queen. That hardly was he yesterday. A man!
 What heart, what brain of manhood had God sown
 In this poor fair fool's flesh to bear him fruit?
 What seed of spirit or counsel? what good hope
 That might have put forth flower in any sun?
 We have plucked none up who cut him off at root,
 But a tare only or a thorn. His cheek
 Is not much changed, though since I wedded him
 His eyes had shrunken and his lips grown wan
 With sickness and ill living. Yesterday,
 Man or no man, this was a living soul;
 What is this now? This tongue that mourned to me,
 These lips that mine were mixed with, these blind eyes
 That fastened on me following, these void hands
 That never plighted faith with man and kept,
 Poor hands that paddled in the sloughs of shame,
 Poor lips athirst for women's lips and wine,
 Poor tongue that lied, poor eyes that looked askant
 And had no heart to face men's wrath or love
 As who could answer either,—what work now
 Doth that poor spirit which moved them? To what use
 Of evil or good should hell put this or heaven,
 Or with what fire of purgatory annealed
 Shall it be clean and strong, yet keep in it
 One grain for witness of what seed it was,
 One thread, one shred inwoven with it alive,
 To show what stuff time spun it of, and rent?
 I have more pity such things should be born
 Than of his death; yea, more than I had hate,
 Living, of him.
Bothwell. Since hate nor pity now
 Or helps or hurts him, were we not as wise

To take but counsel for the day's work here,
And put thought of him with him underground?

Queen. I do but cast once more away on him

The last thought he will ever have of mine.

You should now love me well.

Bothwell. Ay should I, sweet.

Queen. I think you shall: it were more hard than death,

You should not love me.

Bothwell. Nay, not possible.

Queen. I think God never set in flesh of man

Such heart as yours would be, to love me not,

Bothwell. Will you give order for his funeral?

Queen. Ay.

But if you loved not — I would know that now,

That I might die even this day, and my hands

Shed no more blood nor strive more for your sake;

For if I live, whose life is of your love,

I shall take on them more of toil and blood,

To stain and tire them laboring all their life.

I would not die bloodguiltier than is need,

With redder hands than these and wearier heart,

And have no love to cleanse and comfort them.

For this man, I forgive him.

Bothwell. For which fault?

Queen. That he touched ever and defiled my life

With life of his and death. I am fain to know

You do not love me for his sake the less

Who so have soiled me with him.

Bothwell. Shall I not

Swear it, with him for sponsor to mine oath?

Queen. Kiss me before his face here for a sign.

Bothwell. You have strange doubts and dreams.

Queen. I will not have.

When part we hence, and whither?

Bothwell. I have word

Your careful warden, the grave lord of Mar,

Will hardly give my followers at your prayer

Place to come in to Stirling at our back. Here now the streets begin to sound and swarm

So that my guard is now for more than pride;

Wherefore I hold it well we take with us Some friends of our own counsel, as Argyle,

Huntley, my brother-in-law that shall be none,

With Maitland and the archbishop, and set forth

To the lord Seyton's, who shall give us house

Till this loud world fall stiller than it is.

Queen. Be it where you will, and how: do you but lead,

Would I not follow naked through the world?

For him of whose dead face mine eyes take leave

As my free soul of shameful thought on him,

Let him have private burial some fit night

By David whom he slew. I mind me now 'Tis not a year since I fled forth with him

Even through the graves where he shall lie alone,

And passing through their dusty deadly ways

For some few minutes of the rustling night

I felt his hand quake: he will quake not now

To sleep there all night long. See you to that. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. — SEYTON CASTLE.

LORD HERRIES and SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Herries. So stands it, sir: she hath put into his hands,

<p>Besides the lordship of the port of Leith, The castle's government of Edinburgh, Of Inchkeith and Blackness, three master keys That keep the doors o' the kingdom. In Dunbar He sits now lord, and gathers men to hold By her next gift Dumbarton: while she sends A privy message for a priest to plead With the French king, — that by his mother's mouth And his own hand hath warned her, if her lord Sleep unrevenged, she being so shamed henceforth Must hold them for her enemies, and put off All thought to flee for fear into their guard From peril of her subjects, — even to him She sends for payment of her dower foregone Wherewith to levy hireling bands in France With but her babe for captain called, and be Fenced round at least with all of these she may, Of whose despatch none here must know before, Nor, if these fail her, of her frustrate aim; Then, ere her mourning month be here played out With hound and horn and soldierlike delights To recreate her natural heart and life, She must repossess to Holyrood, and meet The ambassador from England, Killi- grew, Who comes to find folk sorrowing and in fear With counsel for our peril and our grief, And falls upon us feasting; and to him She plights her faith that by this par- liament Shall Bothwell have his trial, and the cause</p>	<p>Be sifted clear in the eyes of all good men; Wherewith content he parts, or discon- tent, I know not, but is gone; and she come back Takes heed no more than of a harp unstrung What plaint or plea, what charge or menace, comes From her lord's father, but to his de- mand For convocation of the nobles made Returns her word their house shall meet in spring, And puts his charge by lightly as she may. Of all this, nothing, in my mind, goes well. <i>Melville.</i> Nor aught in mine. Your fellows of her faith Who stand as yet in England on her side Will fall off from her, hearing what I doubt All ears will hear too soon: I have shown it her By letter sent me from a faithful Scot That long hath wrought among them on her part, And freely thence wrote all his fear for me To lay before her, and his grief to hear Such bruit of her intent as could but slay The opinion of her judgment, who must lose, By such design, God's favor and her fame, And in each kingdom that should kiss her hand Each man's heart born her heritage, and miss The noble mark she shot at. I, adjured Of him that wrote to bring this in her eye, Gave her to read it, which she gave again, Silent; then came the secretary to me A short while thence, and took me by the hand, Desiring me as by the queen's desire</p>
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To let him see it, who had given him
 late to know
 I had shown her a strange letter, and
 devised
 By mine own counsel for Lord Both-
 well's wreck;
 And having read, What thing was in
 my mind,
 He said, to do this, which being known
 to the earl,
 As shortly there was need to fear it
 should,
 Would cause him surely seek my life?
 And I,
 It was a sore thing for true men to
 see
 So good a princess run on utter wreck,
 And no man be so far concerned in her
 As to forewarn of peril. He replied,
 As one who had newly left her wroth,
 I had done
 More honestly than wisely; bade me
 fly
 Ere the earl came up from dining; and
 being flown
 I know he sought to slay me, who lay
 hid
 Till his main rage was slackened; and
 the queen,
 Who had made him swear to seek no
 scathe of mine,
 When at their meeting next she showed
 it him,
 Chid him as who would cause her to be
 left
 Of all her servants: then he swore
 anew
 I should receive no harm; whereof
 again
 Being advertised I spake with her, and
 showed
 She had never done me so much wrong
 as this,
 To make the letter a device of mine
 Which came even whence I had given
 her word; and yet
 Had it not come, I had held me bound
 to speak
 Freely, with reverence and humility,
 My thought as did that letter, being
 of mind
 At one therewith. But she would give
 no ear:

Nor is there force in counsel or man's
 wit
 To avert this ill she binds upon herself,
 Who breaks the bonds in twain that
 hold her friends,
 And fetters her own feet with gyves of
 steel,
 When she hath need of them to stand
 or flee
 Before the face of peril multiform
 That lightens on us flame-like: you, my
 lord,
 Whose love she hath proven, are not
 of me to learn
 The immediate feature of it.
Herries. Alas! not I:
 I have taken too much note thereof,
 and stand
 Too near its fangs to live of them un-
 scathed,
 Except I make haste hence.
Melville. What haste, my lord?
Herries. I have spoken with her of
 their purpose blown
 From lip to lip already on men's breath,
 To loose the bonds that bind her lover
 yet
 By witness of the lady of Buccleuch,
 Who shall proclaim herself his para-
 mour
 And pre-contracted to him by promise-
 plight
 To prove his wife no lawful wife, but
 bound,
 Will she or no, and love him not or
 love,
 To sue divorce from him; if all this fail,
 Then by remonstrance of their kindred
 blood
 Found some four cousinships away, this
 bond
 Shall melt or break that parts him from
 the queen.
Melville. Why, ere his marriage with
 the Lady Jane,
 She had her dispensation from the
 Pope,
 For the blood mixed between them, of
 all bars
 Which might have maimed it with im-
 pediment.
Herries. So had she, but they think
 to cover it

As with a veil of invalidity
 Pretexed for pretence, or with dumb
 show
 Darkly disclaimed: this shall not cum-
 ber them;
 And they will buy compliance and
 good-will
 Of Huntley to his sister's putting off
 By restoration of his forfeit lands.
Melville. All tongues i' the land will
 as one mouth of fire
 Cry death and shame against it.
Herries. So said I.
Melville. So said you to her?
Herries. I said so; whereat she,
 As 'twere half smiling in a wondering
 shame,
 Half mourning to be guiltlessly mis-
 judged,
 With fervent eyes' fall and with scorn-
 ful lips
 Protests me, never had she thought of it.
 Wherefore I hold it ill to tarry here.
Melville. Your wisdom shall do well
 to spare no speed,
 But get it gone from eyeshot of them
 both.
Herries. I know it; yet would I plead
 again with her,
 For pity and honor of the imperilled
 state,
 That should be shaken with her fall to
 death,
 And the crown shattered into shards of
 gold.
 For as a wolf anhungered and awaked,
 That long hath slept and starved, with
 foodless dreams
 Assuaging its blunt fangs through blood-
 less hours,
 The common people, that in dumb dim
 rest,
 With heartless hopes assuaging its blind
 heart,
 Hath fed for ages on itself asleep,
 Shows now the keen teeth and the
 kindled eyes
 Of ravening heads innumerable, that
 gape
 And glare about the wide ways of the
 world,
 Seeking their meat of God; and if he
 fail,

Then of the devil that burns in minds
 of men
 Rebellious, whom their heat of heart
 eats up
 Till the fire fasten on authority
 To lay red hands of ruin on all state,
 And leave in ashes empire; as of late
 This Ket in England, and his like that
 swarm
 At heel of the new creeds in Lutheran
 lands
 To pluck the sun out of the heaven
 of rule,
 And leave men dark and kingless.
 Hath not Knox
 Struck with his fangs of speech on
 monarchy
 No less than on the Church that first
 was stung,
 Preaching for all men knowledge
 equally
 And prostitute and perilous freedom
 shared
 With all blear eyes, brute mouths, and
 unwashed hands,
 That lust for change, and take all fires
 for light,
 Except the sun's wherein their fathers
 walked?
 And shall not these at any breach break
 in
 That flaws the sea-wall which forbade
 their sea
 To drown all banks that bound it?
 She will make
 Of all that lived in Scotland hers and
 ours
 A ruin and republic of strewn wrecks,
 Ranks rent, bonds broken, all things
 orderless,
 A commonwealth of dead men's bones
 and dung,
 Dust, mire, and blood, and one red
 rank of beasts
 That rage and revel in equality.
Melville. 'Tis true, the commons are
 as waters chafed
 Since this wind blew amongst them:
 wave by wave
 It lifts their heads up, and the murmur-
 ing air
 Breathes hard and blackens with the
 blast of change.

Herries. And were none touched
with danger but herself,
This yet were pity enough for tears of
blood,
So fair she is, and less by place than
kind
Royal, so high and so assured of spirit,
So full of all things all men love or
fear,
Heart's light and fire, a soul born
winged, with eyes
That mate the sun's eye and the light-
ning's; yea,
It were past count of pity, past men's
thought,
That she should fall for love's light
sake self-slain.

Melville. There were one way to
serve her that would be
Most thankless, being thankworthiest;
but none else.

Herries. That were no way for feet
that would not walk
Red as her enemies' did, whose passage
shook
With its near sound her life and fame;
such ways
Let Morton take, or Maitland's weap-
oned wit,
Whose words are swords.

Melville. It may be so they will.

Herries. Death?

Melville. Nay, who knows when death
may come?

Herries. Why, they
Who strike the spur into his fleshless
side,
Who prick him forward with their craft
for goad,
Or put for sword their hatred in his
hand.
They have done deeds of deadlier
policy
Than make submissive show toward
Bothwell here,
Then snare and slay him, or put the
queen in ward:
Would they do this, they might be ser-
viceable
But perilous must be, putting hand to
work
That treads nigh treason though for
loyalty.

Melville. Whose may know their
mind, it is not I.

Herries. She hath sent for Murray
hither; in his eye
We may take note which way their fac-
tion looks.
If yet toward violence and red-handed
craft,
This mood of hers will strip her for
their strokes
Naked, and leave us handless that
would fight
On her just side against them. God
mend all!

*Enter the QUEEN, BOTHWELL, SEYTON,
the MARIES, and Attendants.*

Queen. The wind has moved my blood
like wine; I am full
Even to the heart's root of its spirit of
life.
Flew not my hawk the last flight well,
that sent
The tumbling hern down from her high-
est? I think
You have none better. Is our brother
come?

Seyton. He is now alighting, madam.

Queen. By this hand,
I would when we must 'light from horse
we might
Take wing instead, and so what time
we live
Live ever at glad speed save when we
sleep!
It points and edges the dull steel of life,
To feel the blood and brain in us renew
By help of that life lifting us, and speed
That being not ours is mixed with us
and serves.
I would hold council, and wage war, and
reign,
Not in walled chambers nor close pens
of state,
But or in saddle or at sea, my steed
As a sea-wave beneath the wind and me,
Or the sea serving as a bitted steed
That springs like air and fire. Time
comes, they say,
When we love rest, house-keeping sloth,
and calms:
To me I think it will not come alive.

Herries. Madam, I would change yet
one word with you

Ere I go hence, or others take your ear.

Queen. So shall you, sir; yet is my heart too light,

And its live blood too merry from the chase,

And all my life too full of the air of joy
Whereon it mounts up falcon-like for prey,

And hovers at its wings' width ere it strike,

To give wise words wise welcome: yet what grace

I may to your grave counsels will I show
And modesty of audience. — Tell my brother

I shortly will receive him. [*Exeunt all but the QUEEN and HERRIES.*]

My good lord,

It is for that old honor and true love
I bear your high name and your flawless faith

That yet mine ear makes way now for your words,

In trust they will not wound it for its pains

With any tuneless or intemperate breath.

Herries. Had I no heart, or in the heart I have

No love to serve you, madam, and no faith,

I had parted hence without more toil of tongue

Or strife of speech unpalatable and harsh

In ears made wide for music; but in me
Is heart enough to burn with fire of pain,

If not to lighten with that fire their eyes
For whose sake it consumes me, when

I see

Danger and death masked as true men
and bold

Attend about them with sheathed knives
in hand

And shut mouths as of serpents. Let
me not

Incense again your flame of spirit and
scorn

With faint and void reiteration of dead
words

That spent in vain their spirit before:
I speak

Not now so much to move you as would
God

I had the might to move, but of myself
Rather to save my soul of faith alive,

And my deep heart of duty toward your
grace,

By speech though fruitless, and by love
though lost,

That will not pass forth silent, and give
way

To loud-tongued ruin that shall speak
too high

For ears to close against it. Queen of
Scots,

Lady that have the loftiest life in hand
Even yet that ever was of queen on
earth, —

Last hope of men that hope through
you in God,

Last comfort of his Church, light of his
lamp

That men have nigh blown out with
blasts of night, —

O you to whose fair face and hand uplift
The treble-kingdom islands should turn
back

Out of the shadow of storm to follow
them,

And in the shadow of faith instead lie
down

Beneath the wings that covered your
crowned head,

Even hers that brood above her fold
and yours,

The Church your mother's, that by no
hand else

Looks yet to gather three lands in and
save, —

Who have the heart and the eye and
the hour for this

Which to none other God may give
again

So as you have them, — you that should
be writ

In all the royal records of the world
Savior, the light and the right hand of
God

Shown in a woman, to bring back and
build

What was blown down or shed as dust
on the air, —

You that have spirit and mind to ap-
prehend,

And to that apprehension put swift hand,
 Nor slow of soul nor fearful, — you, our queen,
 And England's heir, that should make higher on earth
 The name of Scot than any star in heaven,
 And on the cleft growth of two thorny stems
 Bid one rose flower of Catholic royalty
 Not to be plucked or trampled, — Oh, will you,
 So great, so fair and fearless as you are,
 That were you no queen, or such other one
 As no such high cause calls on, you would seem
 Not less a thing made to heroic end,
 A creature crowned and armed by God to bear
 His witness to his work, and in man's eye
 Stand signal-wise lighting the beacons sea, —
 Will you put all this as a garment off,
 And change it like a vesture? By your life
 Which is the life of this land's majesty,
 And your high soul which is our spirit of hope,
 Slay not all these: help them that trust in you;
 Help God, lest we believe him for your sake
 Ill-minded toward us for our sin, to turn
 This empire to a populous wilderness,
 A riotous desert where things vile are crowned,
 And high made low, and low things set on high,
 And rule trod under with foul feet and bare,
 And kingdom parcelled by hard hands and red.
 Pity this people: give not up your realm
 To its own madness that takes fire at yours,
 And lights its ruin at your own ruin, to run
 By that blind light darkling to death and hell;

Cast not your name down under foot of men
 For such ill cause as loveless love that is
 Light lord of foolish women, or such will
 As wherewith men self-slaughtered gird themselves.
 For shame and pity and peril shall be they
 Who shall attend and wed you to your will,
 And the ring broken of the kingdom's peace
 That is yet whole and circular as a crown
 Shall be the new ring on your wedded hand,
Queen. Have I not said I never thought of it?
Herries. I but beseech you, keep from thought of it,
 Or from such show as puts it in men's minds,
Queen. If this be all your counsel or your care,
 You crave but what you have: I have given no cause,
 By favor shown to faith and loyal hearts,
 For the evil-witted world to tax me of love.
 Twice have you had mine ear now to this tale,
 And thrice I pray you that you seek it not.
Herries. I shall no more. God keep your grace in joy!
Enter BOTHWELL and MURRAY.
Queen. Good morrow, brother; and you, my lord, good day,
 Since you go hence.
Bothwell. Goes my lord from us yet?
Herries. Even now I take my leave.
 Farewell, my lords,
 And God be with your counsels. [*Exit.*
Bothwell. Fay, he shall.
 The queen was fain to have your voice, my lord,
 Ere she go back to the distempered town.
Murray. That shall she have, sir.
Queen. Brother, we hear word
 How the good town is troubled of lewd men

With libels writ and hung about the streets,

That in our servants' name deface our own

With fierce invention: wherefore I desired

Your counsel with my lord here and good help

For satisfaction of well-willing men.

Murray. Even such will tell you it mislikes the town

That Lennox, as they say, should be debarred

From entrance save with six men and no more

To hold his cause up on the trial day, And the main witness on his part refused

As under charge of treason for his words

Set forth in writing on the Tolbooth gates;

This makes them doubt of justice to be done,

And brood or babble of devised delay, With tongues and minds diverse and dangerous.

Queen. What!

Shall one proclaimed our traitor pass unscathed

To bear again false witness, for whose sake

The ports are guarded, and the skipper marked

For death who helps him from this kingdom forth

To mock the judgment whence he stands attain'd

Of foregone treason; and must now stand free,

And the law loose him, and receive his word

As a true man's and taintless? What are they

Whom by such witness Lennox would impeach

Besides my lord here who shall answer him?

Murray. James Balfour, and your outland serving-folk,

Sebastian, Joseph Rizzio, with two French,

John of Bordeaux, and Francis, of your train.

Queen. They shall have trial, and answer it.

Murray. 'Twere best

They did so soonest: time grows full of tongues.

There was one late went through the streets by night,

With four or five accompanied for guard That would let none take knowledge of him, crying

Of his own guilt most lamentably on God,

Lord, open heaven, and pour down of thy wrath

Vengeance on me and them that have cut off

The innocent blood! whom the chief magistrates

Have seized, and cast into the four thieves' pit;

But still his cry hangs in the common ear.

Queen. Some traitor hired, or madman; but I sent

To seek the comfort of your hand and help

For weightier cause than of such tongues.

Murray. What cause?

Queen. That shall he show who bears most part therein;

Yet are you parcel of it, and I myself For love of both and honor toward you.

Speak. [To BOTHWELL.

Bothwell. My lord, I doubt not but your heart conceived

Never that thing whereto being done you feared

To set your hand in sign: I therefore pray you

To look upon the charge for which I stand

In the land's eye accountable, as one That was consenting with the rest our friends

To what for my poor profit was not done,

Nor only plotted for no end but mine; And, for the part your honor has herein,

To underwrite the bond that writes me safe,

And set your name for seal upon my side.

Queen. So much would I beseech you
too: the bond
By you subscribed here in my lord's
defence
Shall be the signet of your faith and
love
Set on my heart and his that honor you.

Murray. I would my duty might in
all things serve
No less your honor than maintain mine
own;
But I will set no hand to any bond
Shall bind me to defence or fellowship
Of deeds whereof I know myself no
part.

I gave consent to no more than divorce
Between two hands mismated, king's
and queen's,
Whereby the kingdom's heart was rent
in twain,
And reconciliation found not where to
stand;

But of no red and secret bond of blood
Heard I the bruit before the deed took
fire.

Bothwell. Will you so swear? what!
none?

Murray. I have said; and you,
That refit your kinsman Balfour by de-
vice

Out of my hand and thwarted judg-
ment, see
Your heart be set not now to climb too
high

A stair whereon the foot that slips
grows red,
And, stumbling once in blood, falls
whence nor wing

Nor hand can lift it from the pit again.

Queen. Vex not yourself lest he
should fall or stand
With whom you stand or fall not.

Bothwell. My desire
Was toward no help of riddling coun-
sellors,

But of such friends as speak with hand
for tongue

And acts for parables: your wit, my
lord,

Is toward of the queen's need nor of
mine.

Murray. It may be, no; but to make
trial of that,

Ere I take ship for France, the ways
being barred

By force and strife through Flanders to
the south

And those fair towns that with her high-
ness' leave

Shall call me guest a while in Italy,
I am bound for London, where I fear
and hope

My tongue may serve her more than
here your hands

If it make fair her cause in English eyes.

Bothwell. What hath her cause to do
with their bleared sight,

Or with her name their judgment? Who
need care

What color we that breathe with our
own lips

Wear in the mist made of their breath
far off?

Murray. The ambassador that bore
her last word back

Hath but made way for one at point to
come

Whose message, carrying weight as in
wise ears

It needs must carry, will take form and
force

From present witness of his eye that
reads

What mind is borne here and what
work is done,

What judgment or what counsel most
bears weight;

Which it imports us for this land's
great sake

That the English queen misknow not
nor misread

For fault or fraud of darkling evidence.

Bothwell. And you it is must give
those blind eyes sight,

Shape to the shadows of that ignorance,
form

To their loose judgment of us? What
have we,

What hath our Scotland here or queen
of Scots,

To do with English tongues? can we
not strike

Nor stand nor walk alone, but for our
need

Must use their hands and feet, their wits
and eyes,

To help us live, or live not? By my
 life,
 Which is not held in pawn yet of their
 leave,
 I had rather be an English horse or ass
 Than on these terms a Scot, to square
 my will
 By their inscribed conditions.

Murray. At your will
 Lies your own way of life; nor yet this
 land's,
 Nor theirs that living should be lords
 of it.

Madam, to God's care I commend your
 grace
 Who take with careful heart my leave
 of you,
 Lest you too much should lack the care
 of men.

Queen. Be not too careful for my
 sake: your leave
 Was given ere you could take it. Sir,
 farewell.

Murray. Farewell, as you shall will
 it. [Exit.

Bothwell. God be with you!
 Your wisdom shall not be so hot of
 foot

But it may be outspeeded. If it lay
 Plots with the stranger, our prevention
 here

Must pluck the fangs out of its craft.
 And first
 With his own hand shall Huntley draw
 the bond

Whereto will we set ours in pledge ere
 long

To make them fast by contract: I being
 free

To plight mine own, as by consent un-
 bound

From hers that was my wife pretended;
 you,

Being by this troublous time bent and
 inclined

To seek some stay in wedlock, and put
 off

The weak estate of widowhood, yet
 loath,

For worthy reasons of grave strength,
 to choose

Again a stranger subject, have made
 choice

Of me desertless for my fair deserts,
 And purpose even on heel of my di-
 vorce

For their good cause to wed me: this
 subscribed
 Shall in my keeping be laid up, and
 straight

Hence must we back to that loud town
 of yours,

And take our danger by the throat;
 proclaim

At once my trial; if it be possible,
 Before word come from England; let
 the post

That brings you counsel of Elizabeth's
 Find the cause judged, and the cry fallen
 again,

And no link hanging of the gyves of
 law

Round our free feet and steadfast.

Queen. Ah! not mine,
 That are fast bound, and yet can stand
 not fast

Except my love's strength hold them
 up, and strike

These iron toils in sunder. If the bond
 Could bind and loose indeed, knit and
 unknit

Hands that must part from hands that
 are to meet,

With force of more than writing, all
 my heart

Should bleed glad drops to sign and
 seal it. Sir,

Here was again our enemy in mine ears
 Forewarning me of marriage; the same
 tongue

That was before a serpent at your heel
 Shot out anew to sting it; but you know

The craft of this state horseleech, that
 by fraud

Takes pleasure to bear all the world in
 hand

That no one can be sure of him, and
 we

May least of all be by such lips allured
 To trust and find them dangerous.

Bothwell. Nay, by God,
 I mind me how he left his neighbor
 friends

In his faith's name to hang for hostages
 Whose necks paid forfeit of his broken
 bond,

And made his oath a halter for the
Lairds
Of Lochinvar and Garlies. By my life
That this keen tongue would strike at,
in my mind
It were the best work worth a good
man's hand
To quit them on Lord Herries.
Queen. No, let be:
You will unpeople me this land of
friends.
Mine he must live, or lose his name,
and yours
For my name's sake he shall be.
Bothwell. So might I
Find at his hands such friendship as
they twain
Whose throats for him were writen;
and such a friend
Is he that stands behind our deed, and
says
He never heard of manslaying, fie! not
he, —
Our darkling brother with close lips
and clean.
The blood was no part of his bond, he
says,
That his eyes winked on while his hand
was dry;
He will not bear us witness, nor take
part
With me that have done more than
blink at blood.
He will to London, but to speak for
you,
That will he, being a kindly man of
kind,
Whole-blooded in his love and faith to
you,
God wot, no bastard in his brotherhood.
I would give God a year out of my life
That I have kinglike hope to live with
you,
For one sweet breath of time to strike
at him,
And let my sword's lip drink his body
dry,
And with one deep kiss drain his flesh
of blood.
Who smells not by the savor of his
faith
On what close nest of foul and fledg-
ling hopes

His trust sits brooding to build up him-
self
By overthrowing of that crowned head
which keeps
His misbegotten forehead bare of
gold —
And with my hand shall keep it?
Queen. Ay, though all
That breathe on earth mine enemies at
his beck
Rose by the light of his ambiguous
eyes
With his sheathed hand to strike, and
leave ungirt
This forfeit head with empire: but I
know
A stronger hand bared for my help and
stay, —
This that I touch, this that I love; the
star —
That points my feet on pilgrimage, the
staff
That stays my steps back to that trou-
blous town
Whereof they are weary, yet would halt
not now,
But tread more fleet than fire their fiery
way
To that fair end where they were fain
to be.
He will set forth to-morrow.
Bothwell. Ere we go,
I will take order that men's tongues be
clipt
Who show too broad their conscience
of remorse.
There was a knave of Balfour's in our
trust
That hath by this, being found unsure
of mouth,
Resigned it to the counsel-keeping
worm.
If more there be that live not stingless
yet,
The same dumb mouth that has nor
lips nor tongue
Must open for them privily: the grave
Hath gorge enough for all such secret
food,
And will not babble of the hands that
feed.
For them that being in blood of our
own kind

Will stand elsewhere against me than
in court,

I will make present proffer of myself
To answer them in arms.

Queen. You shall not fight.

Bothwell. Not if no need be.

Queen. There shall be no need.

Not in this cause, you shall not need to
fight.

We will set on the trial presently,
And after we may sleep with no blood
more.

SCENE IV.—THE UPPER CHAMBER
IN HOLYROOD.

The QUEEN and MARY BEATON.

Queen. Is it not hard on ten?

Mary Beaton. At point to strike.

Queen. This forenoon will outlast the
night for length.

How looks the morning?

Mary Beaton. Like the time of year:
The heaven is red, and full of wind;
the clouds

Are rent and routed of the striving sun
Like a lost army.

Queen. Is there no noise abroad?

Mary Beaton. The throngs grow thick
in rumor; faces scowl,

Eyes burn, brows bend, and all the cry
o' the crowd

Waits to break forth but till a fire-
flaught fall

To make the dumb brands speak, and
shoot out flame,

When he shall pass for whom it waits
to burn.

Yet have I seen as great a throng from
hence

As frets there now.

Queen. I would he had thought to-
day

To ride with doubled guard! What
brawl is there?

Mary Beaton. The messenger from
Berwick, as I think,

That would have entrance to you, and
is thrust back

By the lord Bothwell's kin that keep
the gates.

Queen. What! here so soon? I will
not see him till night.

I am asleep; if there be brawls i' the
court,

Call out the troopers, bid my French
guard forth

To quell all rioters.

Mary Beaton. They are of your own
part

That make the brawl, my lord's men
and your guard

That press about the gateway.

Queen. The cry sinks:

Is he not come, that so their noise is
fallen?

Mary Beaton. And Maitland with
him: he signs them silent, takes

From the English messenger a letter
sealed,

And leaves all still.

Queen. I prayed him see me first
Before he rode to trial. All will be well,

If he have stayed their storm, and keep
his heart

High as his fortune.

Enter BOTHWELL.

Is that brawl at end?

Bothwell. Here is a letter by a hot-
foot post

Brought from Sir William Drury, that
his queen

Through him commends her counsel in
to you,

And bids you, or my thought belies it,
show

All favor and furtherance to your
enemy's plea,

Lennox, whose cause she finds most
fair, and would not

For your own sake see slighted or put
by,

Lest your fame bleed: look if she say
not so;

Else I know nothing of her maiden
mind,

Who sometime lived her prisoner.

Queen. Let that rest;

But tell me what the spring was of this
noise

That shook our hearing: would he
speak perforce—

This English post, though bidden back
—with me?

Bothwell. But that our fellows thrust
him from the gate:

My captain of the castle, a stalwart
 guard,
 The Laird of Skirling, that I put in
 charge,
 Called to the guide aloud, he should be
 hanged
 For bringing English villains through
 to us here,
 And hands were there to reive the
 rope to him;
 Then drew your guard together and
 our troops,
 Whose musters line the straitened
 streets with steel
 That holds embanked their muttering
 multitudes
 Till I ride through; and those within
 the gates
 Hurtled together with blind cries and
 thrusts,
 But at my sight fell silent as a sea
 Settling, that grows yet with the sunken
 wind,
 And holds its peace with unslaked
 wrath. Then I
 Took from the pressed and laboring
 messenger
 His letter for your hand, who were not
 risen,
 And should ere night receive him: so I
 said,
 And thus it shall suffice you do, so
 be it
 We bear the bell to-day in parliament,
 Where I should be by this at bar, to
 stand
 And makè mine answer.
Queen. I am not sick of fear,
 Yet my heart loathes its burden of this
 hour,
 And beats and drops like a bird wound-
 ed. Nay,
 I do not hold you: go; 'tis but my hand
 Fastens on yours; my heart would have
 you gone,
 And here again to assure me of good
 speed.
 Whom have we of the judges on our
 side,
 Tell me once more, whom doubtful-
 colored, whom
 Our enemies certain? let me know it
 again,

That I may read the bede-roll of their
 names
 Here over in my heart while you are
 gone
 To make it sure and strong, come evil
 or good,
 That neither find me heartless.
Bothwell. Of our part
 The lord of Arbroath for the Hamil-
 tons
 Is as his father's person, Chatelherault,
 And Cassilis a mainstay safe as steel;
 Caithness and Herries are such friends
 of yours
 As love me less for your sake, yet I
 think
 Must strike to-day beside us; one man
 most
 I would we might have razed out of the
 roll,
 Which is the assessor Lindsay; who
 shall be
 As poison to us; and evil is our chance
 That Morton being of kin to your dead
 man
 Should not sit here to help, as but for
 this
 I would perforce have bound him to
 our side:
 But let this be; we shall bear bravely
 through
 For all their factions and fierce policies
 As knives ensheathed against us, or
 being foiled
 Find surer issue than they wot of. So,
 With such good hope as grows of a
 good heart,
 Give me God-speed.
Queen. God-speed you as I pray
 You may speed ever: all my prayer is
 spent,
 I can no more of wishing; what I
 would,
 That must you will, having my heart in
 you,
 That beats but with your blood, thrills
 with your sense,
 Thinks with your thought, desires with
 your desire,
 And lives upon your living. Where
 you go,
 You bear me with you; where your
 face is set

Mine eye takes outlook, and where falls
 your foot
 I tread beside you silent. Oh! this day
 Shall be to us as the crown o' the wave
 that turns,
 And bears inshore the lading of our
 lives,
 With all the might of its great heart
 that breaks
 And brings us into harbor; we shall
 stand
 High on the beach where it was spent,
 and praise
 The faithful hour that served us; yea,
 even this
 Shall be a dear one to us, held fast at
 heart
 When all the pain and doubt of it is
 dead,
 And lovingly remembered: you shall
 look
 From your high place beside your hum-
 ble love
 With kingly eye on this dead day, and
 think
 How she that set her crown about your
 head,
 And put her own beneath your foot, as
 now
 Bade you fare forth, and kissed you.
Bothwell. I am returned,
 Ere I pass forth, already in my heart,
 With my cause crowned: I cannot
 doubt of speed,
 Who have your face before mine eyes
 as fire
 And keep your words' heat in mine ear
 to burn
 If I should shrink, and sting my spirit
 alive
 For love's and shame's sake. When
 we meet at night,
 A king's kiss will I set upon these lips
 That seal me royal ere I part. Fare-
 well. [*Exit.*]
Queen. I would mine eye were in my
 heart to go
 With that beside him; but the heart it
 is
 Sits now in the eye and follows where
 it may,
 But a street's length; then part they,
 and the sight

Turns back, but not the thought; such
 wings it hath
 As the sight hath not, and is subtler
 nerved
 Than the swift spirit of the eye. O my
 life's light!
 This is not I that looks forth after you
 To feed her eyesight, but who leaves
 you not,
 Who rides beside you, breathes out of
 your lips,
 Looks through your eyes, and triumphs
 in your heart,—
 That unseen and inseparate thing is I.
 Look, he is up: how royally he rides,
 As no king else on earth! and waves to
 me,
 As who should say, Be glad; and glad
 I am,
 Who have the lordliest lover in the
 world,
 And the most heart to love him. Ay,
 that steed
 Should be the higher of heart that
 feels him stride,
 And moves the merrier-mettled: by
 none such
 Was it before bestridden.
Mary Beaton. Was not this
 Lord Darnley's horse?
Queen. Ay, when Lord Darnley was.
Mary Beaton. The horse he loved of
 all the rest, and fed.
 Ere he bestrode it ever?
Queen. Like enough:
 What ails it yet to have eaten of his
 hand?
 It bears not now the worse a better
 man.
Mary Beaton. Nay, so it seems: it
 bounds not as in wrath,
 For aught I see, beneath him, but
 heaves up
 A sidelong head toward his new hand,
 and turns
 The light back on him of a joyful
 eye.
 So is it with only beasts that are be-
 loved:
 They have not hearts like ours.
Queen. What need they have?
 I would have nothing love him as I
 love,

And had it heart it would; yef I do think
 All beasts and men are mad that love him not
 As I should surely were I beast or man.
 He can no longer see my handkerchief;
 Let us go in: I will not sit and wait
 With the street's hustling faces in my sight.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. — THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE IN THE TOLBOOTH.

BOTHWELL, with ORMISTON and others attending, at the bar; ARGYLE presiding as Lord Justice; LINDSAY as assessor; CAITHNESS, CASSILIS, ROTHES, ARBROATH, MAXWELL, HERRIES, and others, as jury; ROBERT CUNNINGHAM as spokesman for Lennox.

Ormiston (aside to BOTHWELL). Fie! look not down so at your feet, my lord:
 What devil is this that irks you? in your face
 A fool might read you what you are: why, so
 Might a man look that were now going to death.
 Hold up your face, for God's sake, and look blithe;
 Alas and aye woe worth them that devised
 The thing that shall make all us mourn, I trow,
 For you that now look sadly.
Bothwell. Hold your peace: I would not yet it were to do; I have
 An outgate any way whereby to pass,
 As ye shall know, and soon. Trouble me not.
Argyle. My lords, ye have heard how to the indictment read
 The accused who stands at his own instance here
 Returns his plea of guiltless; and thereon
 The accuser next invoked to approve his charge,
 Nor answering nor appearing, leaves no cause

For us to judge; but here in his default
 Is risen his servant to sustain his part
 And unawares among us unrequired
 Take up this charge here fallen, or stretch at least
 Some form across of pretext wide enough
 To cover with excuse this lack of charge,
 Which else might seem with emptiness of cause
 To mock your judgments; wherefore, if ye will,
 He stands to plead before us.
Caithness. We are content.
Robert Cunningham. My lords, I am here but in my master's name,
 The earl of Lennox, to declare what cause
 This day constrains his absence; which in brief
 Is first the brief time given for so great work,
 Next that he stands now naked of his friends
 And fellowship of servants to maintain
 His honor with the surety of his life;
 And, having help of no friend but himself,
 He hath laid on me commandment to desire
 A day sufficient for that weight of cause
 Which he shall have to keep it; and if hence
 Your lordships at this present shall proceed,
 Here I protest that if the assize to-day,
 By their twelve persons that upon this charge
 Shall enter now on panel, speak him clear
 Who stands accused for murder of the king,
 It shall be wilful error in men's eyes,
 And not abuse of ignorance, by this cause
 That all men know him for murderer; and hereto
 Upon this protestation I require
 Of your high court a document to stand
 And set my lord's right here on register,

And those men's wrong who put it by to-day.

Argyle. This is some reason if the ground be good

Whereon his protest is built up, to excuse

Default of witness by defect of time; But here that ground is shaken, that we find,

By letters of his own writ to the queen,

My lord of Lennox earnest to bring on, With forward expedition as of fire,

This cause for trial, and by all pleas intent

To enforce this court make haste, and being convoked

Despatch with breathless justice and short stay

The work wherein he seems to accuse us now

For too much heat to move too fast, and mar

The perfect end of trial with force of speed,

Preventing him of witness. Wherefore then

Was his own will so keen, his plaint so loud,

So strong his protestation, to procure The speed too late reproached, too soon required?

Here are we met for judgment, whom himself

Bade the queen summon, with insistent heat

And sharp solicitation urged of wrong, Nay, with the stroke of an imperative tongue,

As though to impel some loath or laggard heart,

And found instead a free and forward will

In her to meet his own; here sits the court,

There stands the man of him or his impeached

To give them loyal answer; where sits he?

Where speaks his proof? where stand his witnesses?

What sentence of what judges shall be given

Where none stands forth to accuse: Here are but words,

Surmises, light and loud and loose, that blow

In the air of nameless lips and babblers' breath

From ear to ear about the wide-mouthed world:

These are not for our judgment.

Caithness. We sit here

To find if there be proof or likelihood More than of common tongues that mark a man

Guilty, and know not why this man or that,

But some name they must have to feed upon;

And in my mind, where witness there is none

Nor prosecution of a personal cause, Even should we err to find the accused man free,

It were no wilful error, nor this court In any just man's sight accountable

As for unrighteous judgment, being cut off

From evidence that it was met to hear; Which we reject not, but require indeed,

Yet can by no solicitous mean procure. Moreover, sirs, one flaw there is to note, More evident than these proofs invisible,—

Even in the letter of the charge, which bears,

Ye see, the ninth day's date of February,

When all we know that on the tenth it was

This violence, by what hand soe'er, was done:

So that I see not, for my simple part, How any man, for that which no man did,

Should stand condemned; for at this date assigned

Was no such deed as this done in the world.

Maxwell. Why, let the charge be drawn again, and straight:

The court is mocked in this.

Caithness. How mocked, my lord? It is necessity of law, to keep

Pure hands by perfect heed of flawless words;
 And that you stood the dead man's friend alive
 Gives you not right nor reason to rise up
 And tax the reason or the right of law.
Maxwell. Right! where is right in all this circumstance,
 Or aught but wrong and broken judgment? where
 Justice or shame or loyalty, to try
 The truth whereon red fraud and violence tread,
 And smother up the tongueless cry of blood?
 Are we not here to judge of murder done,
 And either from an innocent brow take off
 The spot of its suspicion, or convince
 The branded forehead of bloodguiltiness?
 Is there no counsel on the part accused,
 Nor answer of defensive argument
 But of close-lipped evasion? and the court
 In this forsooth is mocked not! We shall stand
 The shameful signs of laughter to the world,
 And loathing to men loyal, if this pass
 With no more trial but mockery, and the land
 Sit silent, and attaint of innocent blood
 Before the face of all men that expect
 For our own sake what justice we shall show
 Or be defamed forever.
Arbroath. Sirs, meseems
 Where no charge is, that no response can be;
 Where none impeaches, none can stand accused:
 And of what mouth what challenge is put forth,
 And on what witness what impeachment hangs,
 To implead of guilt the man we sit to try?
 Herein I say it is the court is mocked,
 Even all of us, and all the baffled land,
 And most this noble man that unaccused

Stands at our bar, and finds not to confront
 One witness, nor one enemy to beat back,
 But only as 'twere a wind that sounds, a breath
 That shifts and falters in the face of proof,
 A blast that envy blows, and fear breaks off,
 Disabled of its nature, by itself
 Frustrate and maimed of its own evil will.
Lindsay. Who talks of envious or of fearful heart?
 We hear the general judgment of the land
 Cry out for trial, and from foreign tongues
 Reproach cast on us that we cast off heed:
 What should we do for shame if in this cause,
 For doubt of one man's friends or of what power
 Might stand behind to buckler him at need,
 We durst not move, nor, though the world looked on,
 Show but a face of justice?
Cassilis. Must we set
 Our judgments by the common tongue that strikes,
 And knows not what the hour is? or become
 Thralls to the praise and bondmen to the blame
 Of men by no tie blood-bound to our love,
 To make our lives look in their foreign sight
 Fair, lest they speak us evil? By my head,
 No Scot I hold him, but a strange man's knave,
 Whose spirit is shrunk or swollen by their breaths.
Argyle. Well, let the votes be given,
 and each man's doom
 Affirm if in his true and equal mind
 The charge be proven upon my lord, or no.
 How go the voices?

Lindsay. By one-half their dooms
The lords here of the jury speak him
free

With clear acquittal of bloodguiltiness:

One-half is voiceless.

Argyle. He then is proclaimed
Of this high court not guilty, and the
charge

On trial stands not good against him.
Sir,

The court upon this plea declares for
you,

You are found free of blood.

Bothwell. My noble lords,
Being proved thus in your judgments
clear of crime,

Here on this door will I to-day set up
My personal challenge in mine honor's
right

To meet in arms, before what judge he
will,

What gentleman soever undefamed
Shall take upon him to confront my
cause.

For their lewd mouths who threat, and
wear no sword,

Your judgment given to acquit me shall
abash

The malice it puts power into mine
arm

With might of right to baffle. Sirs,
good day.

[*Exit with ORMISTON and his followers.*]

Argyle. Break up the court: the
cause is judged.

Maxwell (to LINDSAY). Is judged?
I know not of such seed what stem
will spring,

But that fruit sour as gall and red as
blood.

For men's false mouths must of this
judgment grow.

I would I saw less surely than I see.

SCENE VI.—THE HIGH STREET.

BURGESSES and PEOPLE.

First Citizen. What more of shame
is laid up for us? when
Will Heaven put forth a hand to touch
with fire

These naked sins, and shrivel? Have
you heard

What last lies bare for judgment?

Second Citizen. Why, the last
Is not this half-hour's shame: each
stroke each day

Strikes out a fresh one, that five minutes
old

Dies of the next forgotten. Yesterday
Some talk was of the challenge yet,
which now

No man casts thought on, though by
two good swords

Was battle proffered: by the stout
Laird first

Of Tullibardine, in that brother's name
Whom they for fear have taxed of
treason, so

To eschew his proof and peril; he
defies

The challenger to combat, and requires
England and France for judges of the
field

In person of their sovereigns; this re-
fused,

On such new plea as craven craft may
find,

With his queen's leave the ambassador
himself

Of England gladly with his own heart's
will

Would take the personal cause upon
him.

First Citizen. What!

Is it for fault of Scots to match and
mate

The pride in Bothwell swoln with inno-
cent blood

None but Sir William Drury may be
held

Worth his sword's wrath that walks by
night?

Third Citizen. Perchance

As for his queen he stands here deputy,
And for our own her champion opposite,
Afield with swords' play or abed with
lips',

They hold the match more equal.

Fourth Citizen. Nay, this news

Is gray of beard already; hear you not
How by this priestly parliament of
ours,

That to beguile us and for no good-will

<p>Hath in the queen's name passed its act to affirm God's present gospel stablished in this realm, The murderer lives now twice absolved of blood, And has by voice of prelates and of earls The assize allowed for good that purged him first, And shall be loosened of his marriage- bond That twelve months since was tied? his brother-in-law Shall have again his forfeit lands, and see His sister from her married bed thrust out, And stir no finger; then without more stay Who sees not where the adulterer's foot shall climb, And by what head his own be pillowed? Nay, These papers hung against our walls by night Are tongues that prophesy but truth; ye saw That likeness of a hare enringed with swords, And of a mermaid crowned with burn- ing eyes Who drove the hounds off with a two- thonged scourge That coursed him trembling; and her hand indeed Is found not slow to smite; a law now lives Denouncing on his head no less than death Who shall set up, or seeing shall pluck not down, Such placards writ: the first soe'er who finds And leaves the writing that defames her friend To pass among the people, at her will Shall lie in bonds; but if this brand herself, Then must the man that spared it or that set Die; so the fire-eyed queen of ship- wreck sings</p>	<p>Death in their ears who sail this dangerous sea Whereon the ship reels of our stagger- ing state, And with the flame shot from her eyes puts out The light of theirs that were as light- nings turned On her hare-hearted lover. <i>Third Citizen.</i> Yet they lack The power with boast or menace to seal up The lips of poor men; but three days ago As she rode through the Grassmarket I heard How from their stalls the women cried on her, <i>God save your grace!</i> but with this added word That smote the smile upon her lips to death, <i>If ye be spotless of the dead king's blood.</i> <i>Second Citizen.</i> Such words and souls mount nigher God's ear and eye Than theirs who lent this man their hands to slay And tongues to purge him of their gen- eral sin, — He of St. Andrew's, and his under priest, Bishop of Ross, Leslies and Hamiltons, Whose lips are bloody, and that double soul Argyle, that steers their faction; and this crew Masked here as mouthpiece of the loathing land Must hide the people's heart and true men's truth With craft of prattling prelates; yet such mouths As are unlocked and locked again with gold But gape till God shall pluck their tongues out. <i>Fifth Citizen.</i> Yea, Ye hear but this, and have to burn your ears No hotter news of these men, or what bond Bears written broad and brave such names as these</p>
---	--

Of earls and bishops? this is strange
yet, sirs,
That fires my cheek to tell you?
Second Citizen. Why, men said
There was a knot that met of these to
sup,
Shut in with Bothwell's hackbutters for
guard,
That drew round Ainslie's Tavern,
where they sat
Like a strait hoop of steel to bind them
safe
And hold them fast from starting; and
some bond
Of these his guests at Bothwell's prayer
subscribed
There was that bound them to him,
against all foes
That might impeach him of the crime
discharged
By the open court's acquittal, from this
day
To take his part upon them, and stand
fast
As to their own cause, being made sub-
ject all
To slander and suspicion that but grows
Of honor and high credit held with kings:
So much we heard, and found not
strange.
Fifth Citizen. Nay, this
Was but the grace that served their
banquet in
Of meats as strong as poison; there
ensued
A pledge more mortal of a bond more
base;
Considering this time present, how the
queen
Stood husbandless, and how the gen-
eral weal
Might let her not long live so, should
her mind
By thought of his true services be
moved
To take the earl Bothwell to her loving
lord,
They and each man there met of them
should plight
His honor, truth, and heart's fidelity
To advance this marriage with all
furtherance given
Of counsel, satisfaction, and good help,

As soon as law might give it leave to
be,
And as their common enemy should
esteem
What man soever of evil will to them
Might seek its hinderance; and to this
were set
More than those names ye spake of;
be it for fear,
For craft or vantage, none of these fell
off
Save Eglinton that slipped for shame
away,
And Morton with the secretary, that
gave
Their voice yet for this marriage, but
would seal
No general bond of service on his side
Save these, no priest or peer of them,
but lives
His servant pledged; their hands,
tongues, counsels, hearts,
His or not theirs, and all they man
sworn men.
Third Citizen. I have assurance of a
true man's faith,
That word was writ of this confederacy
To the English council from the Laird
of Grange,
Desiring knowledge with what ear their
queen
Shall take these tidings; and albeit of
late,
In all our trouble being found slow to
help
She hath lost the love here borne her,
if her grace
For this late murder will pursue re-
venge,
She shall win all the hearts of all the
best
Again, he says, in Scotland; who should
be,
With her good help and favor, swift to
take
This vengeance on them, and redeem
from fear
Their prince's life now trembling in the
reach
Of hands that slew his father; for our
queen
Hath sworn she cares not for her lover's
sake

To lose France, England, and her natural land,
 And would go with him to the wild world's end,
 Stript to her smock, ere leave him.

Second Citizen. Has he writ
 So much to the English court of her?
 being ours,
 He should let shame keep silence of
 her shame.

First Citizen. What shame or silence
 can shut up for shame
 That which at noon walks clamorous
 of itself

And boastful to be naked? They will
 wed,

Though thunder sound forth sin, and
 while God speaks
 Will kiss in sight of lightning.

Fourth Citizen. Was there not
 Some noise of strife arisen for fault of
 pay

Among their crew of Bothwell's villains
 here

That hold by force of hand the palace
 gates?

Second Citizen. Such rumor was, for
 certain; and himself

Strode in among the middle mutiny
 Like a thieves' captain, and being
 braved of them

Caught by the throat one that was lord
 o' the brawl,

And would have slain but for the throng
 that cried

And drove upon him shouting, till for
 fear

He was even fain to stop with promises
 Their mouths who clamored; which to
 see fulfilled

Needs must he sit no lower than doth
 a king.

Third Citizen. So then the gates are
 open, and the queen

By leave of these her guards, and him
 their chief,

May part in peace for Stirling now to
 see

Her son in ward there of the castellan?
 Where we, God knows, may give him
 thanks that one

So wise as the earl of Mar and stout of
 heart

Hath our born king in covert, who
 might sleep

On that sweet breast that bore him not
 so safe

As in a hand so honest.

First Citizen. Ay, God help,
 There is no surety in such housekeep-
 ing

As thunder comes forth of the sky by
 night

To fall upon and burn it, yet no storm
 Save of men's making seen, nor fire in
 heaven

Save what rose up from under. Verily,
 Our good lord Bothwell spake but
 truth, who said

To good James Melville, how so strange
 a thing

On earth was never known of: pity 'tis
 He could not come to look upon the
 corpse,

Though Bothwell bade him, seeing it
 was removed;

It was his hapless chance to find it
 gone

And in safe keeping of some secret
 hand

That waited on it living; such things
 are:

The worse hap his. They say it had
 no wound;

So if by some mischance, as God for-
 bid,

The prince were reft unluckily of life,
 I think he should have none for eye to
 see

That might read evil.

Third Citizen. Who shall ride with
 her?

Second Citizen. Why, no great train,
 lest being within the walls

She take the child into her hand, and
 give

For better care to Bothwell's, with the
 keys

That keep this castle too; but yet I
 think

His hand nor hers shall put God's
 judgment back

That waits to take them triumphing,
 and turn

To tears their laughter and our grief to
 joy.

SCENE VII. — STIRLING CASTLE.
The QUEEN and HUNTLEY.

Queen. Will you go back from us?

Huntley. I like it not;

I do not see how this may be made good.

Queen. There is no flaw but in your fainter heart;

The way is fair and even; I cannot think.

What seed is in men's hearts that brings forth fear

Out of all season. Why are you so sad?

The thing is no more dangerous than it was

When our first plot was laid; nay, so much less

By how much these are ours whose names and bonds

Speak on our side inscribed.

Huntley. Madam, not so;

The earl of Sutherland, whose forfeiture

Your grace but now remitted with mine now,

When we shall meet my brother's men in arms,

Will die before he yield you to their hands.

Queen. My lord, you have no brother of him now

That was your sister's husband. I will write

To bid him bring up men enough to out-match

All that ride with us homeward, and so far

That none the hardiest shall but think on fight.

Three hundred hath your earl? then in his rank

There shall be more than of our company,

That I to spare men's blood may yield myself.

Huntley. It is too gross and foolishly devised;

When I spake last with him, he laid on you

The charge to say where we should meet and when,

And what should by contrivance plead for me,

To save my name though you be yielded up

Who ride with me for escort; all this charge

He lays on you, and bids me write again

What you shall say by letter; of himself

He moves not yet; and I beseech you think,

Before you move him, in what enterprise

You put to pledge your honor, that can never

With honor wed him who being wedded man

By force and violent hand hath borne you off;

Nor will my folk endure it, I wot well, But it must come to trial by hap of fight

With doubt and accident of answering arms:

Where, if we fail on our part, then on his

Shall be the blame and bloody note of war

Made on your personal guard; but if we win

That ride with you as followers, then is he

The most forlorn of men revolted; else,

I shall be called of all that sin on earth

The most unthankful traitor, who being now

But newly of your grace remade your man

Shall yield you up by treason without blows

Into a rebel's handling; and the lord's, I doubt, when they shall see you in his

hold,

Will think not much to unswear their oaths, deny

Their words and hands as given through force or fear,

And signed not of their hearts; I pray, think of it,

And take some other counsel to your mind.

Queen. My lord, if you bear back my word to him,
 It shall be this: that, seeing I am come so far,
 If of his own will he withdraw him not,
 For no persuasion nor for death itself
 Will I be brought to break my faith with him.
 For this you say of them that follow you,
 And of your fear to bear a thankless name
 For my supposed betraying, you should by now
 With him have taken counsel of the chance,
 And not have thrown it here across my way,
 Who have no choice to pass not over it,
 Seeing I may turn not back for life or death,
 For fear or shame or love of any man.
 As for the place, he doth not well to cast
 On me too even the election: let him choose,
 And send me word, with pardon that herein
 I tax my lord of too much negligence.
 For those your followers whom you most misdoubt,
 You shall be wise to weed our train of them
 If any wise mean be to draw them forth.
 This is my counsel, of a simple wit
 And womanish, but not so vile at heart
 As to go back for danger from its faith.
 I pray you so report of me, and say,
 When he shall ask you of my mind again,
 No more but this word only: and farewell. [*Exit HUNTLEY.*]
 This faint-heart honesty with half a hand
 Is falsèr found at need than falsehood's self,
 And ever was of me more hated. Oh,
 That I might take these hours as in my hand
 And men that yet divide us, with one grasp

To gripe them dead and pluck his fang from time
 That waits to fasten on us unawares
 And make love mortal with the kiss that kills!
 A day and night are as a long life's length
 That part the hungering from the perfect hour,
 The void from the fulfilling.—Nay, come in.

Enter MARY BEATON and PARIS.

Mary Beaton. Here waits my lord of Bothwell's messenger

To bear your word back of Lord Huntley's mind.

Queen. Ay, that I found it trustless.
 Tell my lord

He makes me mad to put his faith in him

And to mistrust that which is wholly his,

Even her true heart to whom he should have sent

Word every day what she should do for him,

And hath done nothing of it. I did say

He should take heed of that false brother-in-law,

Of whom his negligence and heedless faith

Have put us in the danger; on my part

There has lacked nothing toward the work in hand,

And had he not more changed his mind than I

Since I went from him, he should need not now

By stranger's lips inquire of my resolve.
 Say how you see me, and till he send me word

That I will here lie sick, as God he knows

What health I have at heart. Would I were dead,

For all I see goes ill; but tell your lord

This was not in his promise that I find,
 Nor no such matter; but he lets me see

What power has absence on him, to whose bow

His hand has yet another string than mine.
 And look you warn him of this brother-in-law
 That he hath babbled of our enterprise
 Wherein he puts but forth a heartless hand,
 And in what great men's ears he well may guess
 Who knows which most are dangerous; yet methinks
 If still we have need to flatter them, so much
 Might naturally be pleaded on his part,
 That his good service and long amity
 Might well deserve his pardon and their love
 If past a subject's duty he put forth,
 Not to constrain me, but assure himself
 Of such place nigh me that no foreign tongue
 May by strange counsel hinder my consent
 To that whereto he trusts his service shall
 Make him one day to attain; with such excuse
 Shall he persuade them that he stands compelled
 To make pursuit against his enemies:
 And he may find fair words at will to say
 To Maitland most of all, through whose keen tongue
 We hold the rest by the ear; but if at last
 The deed of our device mislike him now,
 Let him send word, and leave not on my head
 The blame of all; and if it like him yet,
 Say I beseech him for the honor of God
 To come with no less force accompanied
 Than of three hundred men; rather with more,
 For that is all the main part of my care;
 Seeing as for Huntley, I assure myself
 He in our play shall henceforth bear no part

But of an honest and a fearful man
 Whose thought and all his toil of heart it is
 To keep the load of treason from his name.
 Therefore I would not have my lord in all
 Trust or mistrust him, but be circumspect
 And take more power unto him.
Paris. So shall I say;
 Your highness hath no message more for me?
Queen. God wot no time it is for us to change
 Tokens and toys of love; yet I would send,
 For very sorrow, something but in sign
 That of my heart's grief I accuse not him
 For his cold writing or forgetfulness,
 His little memory of me and little care,
 And least of all his promise-breach, being now
 So far made his that what thing pleases him
 Is acceptable to me, and all my thoughts
 To his so willingly subdued, that all
 That comes of him proceeds of no such root,
 In mine esteem, as loveless negligence
 Nor any love's lack, but such only cause
 As I desire, being just and reasonable,
 Which is the final order he should take
 For his own surety and honor, who alone
 Is my life's stay for which I only will
 Preserve it, and without which in this world
 My soul desires not but a sudden death.
 Bear therefore to him, for testimony of me,
 How lowly I submit me to his law
 In sign of homage this that I take off
 Of my head's ornament, which is the chief
 And guide of other members, as to say
 How being possessed of that as of a spoil
 Which is the principal, he needs must have

The remnant subject to him with heart's consent.
 And for that heart, that seeing I have left it him
 Long since I have not now in hand to give,
 This stone instead I send him, painted black
 And sown with tears and bones, a sepulchre
 Where to my heart is likened, being as it
 Carved like a tomb or certain receptacle
 To harbor his commandments in, and hold
 More fast than all his memory and his name
 Therein enclosed as in the ring my hair,
 To come forth never till the grant of death
 Shall let him rear a trophy of my bones,
 As is the ring full of them, set therein
 For sign he has made full conquest of my heart,
 That even the bones must be to him bequeathed
 For memory of his victory and my loss
 That was so sweet to me: tell him but this,
 And say that by the enamelling of black
 He shall discern her steadfastness who sends
 And by the tears my fears innumerable
 Lest I displeas him, and those tears I shed
 For his dear absence and for heart's disdain
 That I may not in outward shape be his
 As with full strength and heart and spirit I am,
 And with good cause; for were my merit more
 Than hers of all born ever for men's love
 Found worthiest and most perfect, and as much
 As I desire it might be in his eye,
 Well might I so rest ever, and shall strive

Still to maintain me in his government
 As worthily as I may. Say, I beseech him
 That is mine only good, in as good part
 To take it at my hand as I at his
 With extreme joy received our marriage bond,
 That till the marriage of our bodies be
 Made publicly shall part not from my breast,
 Which keeps it now in sign of all the bliss
 I can or hope for or desire on earth:
 And that my letter here brake off for dread
 Lest this as much should weary him to read
 As I took joy to write it; therefore, say,
 Here did I set a kiss as on his hand
 With such devotion as I pray to God
 To give him long and blessed life, and me
 That only good of all which I desire
 And only may pretend to in the world,
 His love and his good favor who doth hold
 Alone my life up; and this trust I showed
 To you in whom I know the trust he hath
 As I shall for his sake whose wife I am,
 His humble and obedient lawful wife,
 To whom my heart and body are dedicate
 And shall in no wise unto death be changed
 Nor good nor evil make me go from it.
 So tell him, and despatch. [*Exit PARIS*
 What said Lord Mar
 Touching the child's charge to you?
Mary Beaton. But thus much:
 That he would never let it from his hand
 Save with assent of the three several states,
 And on condition there shall be proclaimed
 Some honest lord and worthy such a charge
 As captain of the castle of Edinburgh,

Where only may the prince, he says, lie
safe

From them that slew his father.

Queen. Ay, so brave?

There speaks a man of trust, found
honorable.

I had as lief be dead as see such men
Stand so at point to thwart me: by my
life,

I hold it not a straw's worth in the scale
If I must live so shackled. What! and
now,

When my life trembles on the top of fate,
And all my days hang from this edge
of time

'Twixt night and light suspended,
whence one hour

May hurl all hopes down breathless to
the pit,

And cast me broken at the mountain's
foot,

Or set me sure and steadfast in the sun,
To be so crossed of cozening honesties,
And honors made of craft, and fraudu-
lent faith,

Would spur a blood more sluggish than
my sleep

And prick a drowsier passion. Well,
let be:

Our time will come to take all these in
hand.

What may doubt deem, then, I would
do with him,

That am his mother? Nay, I know
their thought:

It is their fear and hatred of my lord
That glares askant on me; and the
child's self,

I think, as little loves me as he need,
Knowing in what love I held his father.

Come,
I will yet see, before I take my leave,
If there be such a nature in our blood

As can command and change the spirit-
ual springs

And motions of our thought, advance
or check

The pulse of purpose in the soul that
moves

Our longings and our loathings to their
end

By mere control and force unreasonable
Of motiveless compulsion; if such blind

And sensual chances of the stirring
veins

That feed the heart of child or mother
may

Divert and dull the mind's design, or
turn

The conscience and the current of the
will

From its full course and action. I
believe,

Albeit I would not hurt the life I bare,
Nor shed its blood, it is not possible

Such love should live between my child
and me,

Who know what source he came of
more than mine,

And how that part of me once mixed
therewith

Was sullied thence and shamed in
mine own sight,

That loathes to look upon it, yet must
see

In flesh and blood the record writ and
sealed

As oft as I behold him: and you saw
He would not lie within mine arm, nor

kiss,
But like a fox-cub scratched and strove,
to be

Free of my hands again.

Mary Beaton. I see no need
In heaven or earth why you should love
him.

Queen. No?
They say such law there is to enforce
such love

On either part: I know not; but I
think

Love should but flower from seed of
love, and this

Was but a tare sown timeless and in
hate;

Yet so much am I mother in my mind,
That, be it for love or loathing, from
my heart,

When I perforce commend him to that
care

Which will not yield him naturally to
mine,

Fain would I parting know if soon or
late

Mine eyes shall turn upon that face
again

Which out of me was moulded, and
take note,
When each on each looks equal-eyed,
and sees
His crown a shadow that makes mine
a shade,
What king must this be, and what
queen shall I.

SCENE VIII.—DUNBAR. A ROOM
IN THE CASTLE.

MAITLAND and SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Melville. What, have you seen them
since we came from horse?
How looks she now?

Maitland. Disquieted and strange;
And he so hot and high of mood, I
think

We have no safeguard from him but in
her;
And Huntley that at Stirling spake with
me

Of this their counsel, and must now
suspect

It was by me discovered to the lords,
Will turn perforce his fear of Both-
well's wrath

Into a sword to strike as straight as he
Even at my life, it may be; which her
grace

Shall easilier from fear of them redeem
Than her own fame from evidence of
men,

That seeing her prisoner see too if she
came

By force or no, and led by heart or
hand,

To bonds indeed or freedom.

Melville. Nay, myself
Was warned of him that rode in charge
of me,—

The laird here of Blackadder,—how
lord

Was of our lady's counsel; and but now
As they rode in I heard him swear, and
laugh,

Who would soe'er or would not, in
their spite,

Yea, though herself she would not with
her will,

Yet should the queen perforce now wed
with him.

Maitland. The deed has flushed his
brain and blood like wine:

He is wroth and merry at once, as a
man mad.

There will no good come of it.

Melville. Surely, sir,
Of such loose crafts there cannot: all
this land

Will cry more loud upon her than on
him

If she be known consenting.

Maitland. If she be!
How shall not all ears know it on earth
that hear?

But two miles out of Edinburgh, at
noon,

Accompanied of all her guard and us,
She, meeting in mid-road at Almond
Bridge,

The unthought-on Bothwell at his horse-
troop's head,

Who with twelve men lays hand upon
her rein,

Yields herself to him for fear our blood
be spilt,

Or theirs or ours, for tenderness of
heart

Submits her to his violent masterdom,
Forbids our swords, ties up all hands
with words,

And doglike follows hither at his hand
For pure surprise and suddenness of
fear

That plucks the heart out of resistance;
then,

Riding beneath the south wall of the
town,

On show of summons to the castle sent
For help of us enforced thus of our
foes,

We get but fire of guns charged full of
sound

With hay stuffed in for powder; and
God knows

Balfour knew naught of this, the gov-
ernor,

Who was forewarned not first of their
design,

How by no means to cross but further
it

With forecast of his office; nay, all this
Was undevise'd, and on the sudden
wrought

To take her by swift stroke of simple hand;

And so astonied were we all, and so
The castellan, and most of all the queen.

Why, though the world be drunk with faith in lies,

Shall God make this too gospel? From this day

Shall she begin her ruin; with rent heart

I see the ways wherethrough her life shall lie,

And to what end; for never henceforth more

Shall she get good or comfort of men's love,

Nor power nor honor that a queen should have,

Nor hap nor hope renewed in all her days.

She has killed herself to take her kingdom off,

And give into strange keeping.

Enter the QUEEN, BOTHWELL, and HUNTLEY.

Bothwell. Here he stands, —
This was the knave that was to baffle me:

He shall die here.

Huntley. I will not lose the part
My sword should have in him: this hour and hand

Shall cut off craft and danger. Stand, and die.

Mailland. Is it the queen's will that pursues my life?

Then let it strike, and end.

Queen. I charge you, hold!
I will not foully twice be forced of men

To stand and stain mine eyes with sight of blood

Shed of a friend, and guiltless. Hold, I say!

Bothwell. Stand by, for I will slay him.

Queen. Slay me, then,
For I will fling my body on their points

Before your swords shall find him.
Hark you, sir, [*To HUNTLEY.*]

Whose father died my traitor in my sight:

If one hair perish of my servant's head,

You that had back your lands and goods but now

Again shall lose them with your forfeit life

For boot of this man's blood.

Bothwell. Woman, give way!

Queen. Give all your swords way toward me; let me bleed

Ere this my friend that has been true to me:

I swear he shall not.

Mailland. Madam, for God's love,
Come you not in their peril; I am armed,

If both not run upon me.

Bothwell. Fool, I say,
Give place, or I shall know not what I do;

Make me not mad.

Queen. I cannot fear you yet.

Will you strike now?

Bothwell. I should but do you right.
Why thrust you in between me and this man

Whom your heart knows for traitor, and whose tongue

Crossed and betrayed our counsel to the lords?

Had he his will, we should not stand to-day

Here heart-to heart, but you in ward of them,

And I divided from you.

Queen. My sweet lord,
Let not your wrath confound my happiness;

Stain not my fair and fortunate hour with blood

Shed of a good man who shall serve us yet.

It shall more help to have him live our friend

Than fifty-fold slain of our enemies.

Bothwell. Have your will's way: he cannot cross us now;

I care not if he live.

Mailland. I am bounden to you
For so much grace.

Queen. Vex not his mood again.
To-morrow shall all friends be reconciled;

To-night rest here in surety.

Bothwell. Be it so. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IX. — THE SAME.

The QUEEN, BOTHWELL, and the ARCHBISHOP of ST. ANDREW'S.

Queen. What counsel, father? if their league be made
So soon and strong at Stirling, we had need

Surely by this be fast in Edinburgh.
We have sent thither freely as our friends

Lord Huntley and James Melville, who were here

As in our ward, not prisoners; every day

Here lingering makes our enemies bitter-tongued

And our strange state more hazardous; myself

More taxed for willing bondage, or my lord

For violence done upon me.

Archbishop. In my mind,
There is no mean of policy now but speed,

Nor surety but short counsel and stout heart.

The lords at Stirling, while you put off time,

Athol and Mar, and Morton with Argyle,

Are sworn to crown the prince, and of his name

Make to their cause a standard, if you cleave

Still to my lord here, from whose violent hand

With your own leave they fain would pluck you forth,

And keep your honor hurtless; but they see

You will have no deliverance at their hands

From him who, as they say, doth boast himself,

If he may get your child once in his ward,

To warrant him forever in good time
From all revenging of his father's death.

Nay, it is bruited of them all about
How you at parting would have given the boy

An apple poisoned, which he put away,
And dogs that ate it after swelled and died.

Bothwell. The devil is in their lips had I free way,

Fire should seal up and sear them.

Archbishop. So they talk;

The very children's tongues are hot on you,

And in their plays your shadowy action staged

And phantoms raised of your presented deed:

Boys that in Stirling streets had made their game

To act again the slaying of Darnley, so
Were rapt with passion of the pastime feigned

They well-nigh slew the player that took on him

Your part, my lord, as murderer, and came off

Half hanged indeed and breathless; this I hear,

And more much weightier daily from that part

Pointing the same way on you; sure it is,

From France and England messengers desire

To have the prince delivered to their charge

As to be fostered for his surety's sake
Of one or other, safer so bestowed

In foreign harborage of a stranger court

Than at the rough breast of his natural land;

Such offer comes there of Elizabeth
To those unquiet lords, but other aid

They must of her not look for to their part

Who stand against their sovereign.
Now, since these

Are dangers evident, and every day
Puts more in them of dangerous, best it were,

I think, to meet them warlike point to point,

Your hands and powers made one, and multiplied

By mutual force and faith; or you must part,

And each lose other, and yet be neither
 saved,
 Or presently with one sole face confront
 The many-mouthed new menace of the
 time,
 With divers heads deformed of enmi-
 ties
 That roar and ravin in the night of
 state
 Made dim with factions; only majesty,
 With light of bared and kindled brows
 and eyes,
 Can face them to consume; do you but
 show
 Your soul as high as is your crown,
 and power
 As plain as is your cause, you shall en-
 force,
 By resolution and a forthright will,
 The obedience and the allowance of
 these men
 That would constrain you by the fear
 of them
 Within the limit of their leave. I say,
 Proclaim at once the fore-ordained di-
 vorce
 Between his sometime lady and my
 lord,
 And hard thereon your marriage, as
 compelled
 By perilous instance of necessity
 At once to assure you of a husband's
 help
 And present strength in this your need,
 who stand
 Fenceless and forceless with no man
 for stay,
 And could desire none truer and wor-
 thier trust
 Than him whose service done and val-
 iant name
 May warrant your remission of such
 fault
 As men lay on him for the seeming
 force
 With which unwillingly he stood con-
 strained
 To save you even for love's sake from
 their hands,
 Whence, had not he redeemed you as
 by might,
 They had done you worse wrong than
 he seemed to do.

This shall excuse the speed that you
 put on,
 And leave their hands no time to rise
 that would
 Prevent you, being unmarried; and
 your own,
 Forestalling them, shall take again and
 steer
 The helm of this land's general weal,
 else left
 To their cross guidance and false pilot-
 age.
Bothwell. By God, well said and
 counselled.
Queen. All is well,
 Or shall, if but one thing be; and in
 you
 That lies alone of all men. Nay, you
 know it:
 Wrong me not now to ask.
Bothwell. Wrong you not me,
 To cross my wit with riddles, which you
 know
 From no man's lips I love.
Queen. I know not yet
 If there be naught on any lips that live
 Save mine that you love better: I can
 tell
 Too little of your likings.
Bothwell. Be not wroth
 That thus much of them I desire you
 learn,
 And set your heart to it, once being
 schooled. Fair queen,
 These are no chambering times, nor sit
 we here
 To sing love's catches counter-changed
 with words
 That cross and break in kisses: what
 you will,
 Be swift to speak, or silent.
Queen. What I will?
 I will be sure there hangs about your
 heart
 No thought that bound it once to one
 cut off
 And yet may feed it with desire to share
 What is my treasure and my right to
 have
 With her most undeserving; which in
 you
 Were more than Jason's falsehood was,
 that gave

<p>To his new wife such vantage of his old As you give her of me, whose narrower heart Holds not a third part of the faith and love That my obedience bears you, though she wear Against my will such vantage in your sight, By my hard hap; yet would I think not so, Nor liken you to such a trustless man And miserable as he was, nor myself To one so wronged a woman, and being wronged In suffering so unpitiful as she. Yet you put in me somewhat of her kind That makes me like unto her in any thing That touches you or may preserve you mine To whom alone you appertain, if that May be called mine by right appropri- ated Which should be won through faithful travail, yea, Through only loving of you as God knows I do and shall do all my days of life For pain or evil that can come thereof: In recompense of which, and all those ills You have been cause of to me, and must think That I esteem no evils for your sake, Let not this woman with her heartless tears Nor piteous passion thrust me out of door, Who should sit sole and secret in your heart. What hath she borne, or I not borne, for you, And would not bear again? or by what gift Have I set store or spared it that might go To buy your heart's love to me? Have I found Empire, or love of friends, or pride, or peace, Or honor, or safe life, or innocence,</p>	<p>Too good things to put from me; or men's wrath, Terror or shame or hatred of mine own, Or breach of friends, or kingdom's wreck, or sin, Too fearful things to embrace and make them mine With as good will and joyous height of heart As hers who takes love in her prosper- ous arms And has delight to bridegroom? Have I not Loved all these for your sake? and those good things, Have I not all abhorred them? Would I keep One comfort or one harbor or one hope, One ransom, one resource, one resting- place, That might divide me from your dan- ger, save This head whose crown is humbled at your foot From storm that smote on yours? Would I sleep warm Out of the wind's way when your sail was set By night against the sea-breach? Would I wait As might your wife to hear of you, how went The day that saw your battle, and hold off Till the cry came of fallen or conquer- ing men To bid me mourn or triumph? Hath my heart Place for one good thought bred not of your good, Or ill thought not depending on your ill? What hath she done, that yours hath place for her, Or time or thought or pity? <i>Bothwell.</i> What have I, That yours should fix on her untime'y? Nay, Last year she was my wife, and moved you not; And now she is turned forth naked of that name,</p>
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And stripped as 'twere to clothe you,
 comes this heat,
 And fear takes fire lest she turn back,
 or I
 To thrust you forth instead: you are
 fair and fool
 Beyond all queens and women.
Queen. There spake truth,
 For then you said, most loving. But
 indeed
 This irks me yet, this galls with doubt
 and fear,
 That even her plea to be divorced from
 you
 On some forepast adulterous charge, —
 which proved
 She wins her asking, — leaves your hand
 not loose
 By law to wed again, but your same
 deed
 Frees her from you, and fetters you
 from me.
 Then stand we shamed and profitless:
 meseems
 God's very hand can loose not us and
 join,
 Who binds and looses; though Buc-
 cleuch make oath
 She was contracted to you first, and
 this
 No righteous marriage; though she
 plight her soul
 As she made proffer for our hope's
 sake; yea,
 Though you should bring a hundred
 loves to swear
 They had the firstlings of your faith,
 who kept
 No faith with any, nor will keep with
 me,
 God knows, and I, that have no war-
 rant yet
 In my lord's word here which unweds
 you, being
 Matched with your cousin in the fourth
 degree,
 And no proof published if the Church's
 grace
 Were granted for it, or sought; no help
 of this,
 If your love give not warrant; and
 therein
 If she hath half or I have less than all,
 Then have I nothing of you. — Speak
 to him.
 Bid him not break his faith, not this
 now mine;
 Plead for me with him, father, lest he
 lie,
 And I too lose him: God shall pardon,
 say,
 What sin we do for love, or what for
 wrath,
 Or to defend us from the danger of
 men,
 But to me, — me, say, if he be forsworn,
 That God shall forgive it him, nor I.
Archbishop. Be not too careful to
 confound yourself.
 Those bonds are broken by God's leave
 and law:
 Make no fresh bonds of your own
 fears, to do
 What harm these do no more; he hath
 put her off:
 Rest there content.
Queen. Nay, why should I then trust
 He shall not put off me in heart for
 her?
Bothwell. Why, have your choice
 then, and mistrust: God's death!
 I had deemed I had learnt of women's
 witlessness
 Some little learning, yet I thought no
 more
 Than that it was but light as air, snow,
 foam,
 And all things light, not lighter. I
 would know
 What men hold foolish yet that hold
 you wise,
 If not your fear.
Queen. Doth she not love you?
Bothwell. Ay.
Queen. Hath she not cause to hate,
 and doth not hate,
 Who sues to be put from you, for your
 fault
 Craves leave to be cut off, as I crave
 leave
 To take you from her hands, her gift?
Bothwell. God knows:
 She may love, hate, or hate not neither
 love,
 Or both alike: I know not.
Queen. But I know

That you can love not. Nay, then help me, God!
 If I did know this, I would kill myself.
 Yet to more proof I would I had put your heart,
 Ere I gave up to it all the might of mine —
 Which is but feebleness. Well, we will go;
 There is no better counsel. Pardon me
 If my fear seem to wrangle with my faith:
 They are parts but of my love, that with itself
 Strives to be master of its grief and joy
 Lest either overbear it, and therewith
 Put out my life. Come: all things shall be well.

SCENE X. — HOLYROOD.

Enter HERRIES and SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Herries. Is the work done?

Melville. They are wedded fast; and now
 I think would one of them to free herself

Give the right hand she hath given him.

Herries. What, so soon?

Came she as loath into the council-hall,
 Or were her answers as compelled and strange?

Melville. I have not seen for any chance till now

So changed a woman in the face as she,
 Saving with extreme sickness. She was wed

In her old mourning habits, and her face

As deadly as were they; the soft warm joy

That laughed in its fair feature, and put heart

In the eyes and gracious lips as to salute

All others' eyes with sweet regardfulness,

Looked as when winds have worn the white-rose leaf;

No fire between her eyelids, and no flower

In the April of her cheeks; their spring a-cold,
 And but for want of very heart to weep
 They had been rainier than they were forlorn.

Herries. And his new grace of Orkney?

Melville. The good duke

Was dumb while Adam Bothwell with grave lips

Set forth the scandal of his lewd life past

And fair faith of his present penitence,
 Whose days to come being higher than his past place

Should expiate those gone by, and their good works

Atone those evil: hardly twitched his eye,

Or twinkled half his thick lip's curve of hair,

Listening; but when the bishop made indeed

His large hard hand with hers so flower-like fast,

He seemed as 'twere for pride and mighty heart

To swell and shine with passion, and his eye

To take into the fire of its red look
 All dangers and all adverse things that might

Rise out of days unrisen, to burn them up

With its great heat of triumph; and the hand

Fastening on hers so griped it that her lips

Trembled, and turned to catch the smile from his,

As though her spirit had put its own life off,

And sense of joy or property of pain,
 To close with his alone; but this twin smile

Was briefer than a flash or gust that strikes

And is not; for the next word was not said

Ere her face waned again to winter ward

As a moon smitten, and her answer came

<p>As words from dead men wickedly wrung forth By craft of wizards, forged and forceful breath Which hangs on lips that loathe it. <i>Herries.</i> Will you think This was not haply but for show, to wear The likeness as of one not all con- strained Nor all consenting, willingly enforced To do her will as of necessity? That she might seem no part yet of his plot, But as compelled by counsel of those lords Who since her coming have subscribed by name The paper of advice that in his cause Declares what force of friends has Bothwell here In Lothian and on all the border's march To keep good order, and how well it were She should for surety wed him whom she needs Must wed for honor, or perforce live shamed By violence done upon her. <i>Melville.</i> No: there hung Too much of fear and passion on her face To be put off when time shall be to unmask. The fire that moved her, and the mount- ing will, While danger was and battle was to be, Now she hath leapt into the pit alive To win and wear the diamond, are no more: I hope feels the wounds upon its hands and feet That clomb and clung, now halting since the hour That should have crowned has bruised it. No, 'tis truth: She is heart-struck now, and labors with herself, As one that loves, and trusts not but the man Who makes so little of men's hate may make</p>	<p>Of women's love as little; with this doubt New-born within her, fears that slept awake, And shame's eyes open that were shut for love, To see on earth all pity hurt to death By her own hand, and no man's face her friend If his be none for whom she casts them off, And finds no strength against him in their hands. <i>Herries.</i> Small strength indeed, or help of craft or force, Must she now look for of them; and shall find, I fear, no stay against men's spirits and tongues, Nor shelter in the observance of their will That she puts on, submitting her own faith To the outward face of theirs, as in this act Of marriage, and the judgment now enforced Against the allowance of the mass, albeit With a bruised heart and loathing did she bow That royal head and hand imperious once To give so much of her soul's trust away; And little shall it stead her. <i>Melville.</i> So fear I: 'Tis not the warrant of an act affirmed Against the remnants of her faith, nor form Of this strange wedlock, shall renew to her Men's outworn love and service; nay, and strife Lies closer to her than fears from out- ward: these Whose swords and souls attend on her new lord, Both now for fault of pay grown mutinous, From flat revolt they hardly have re- deemed With the queen's jewels and that Eng- lish gift</p>
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Of the gold font sent hither for the
 prince,
 That served him not for christening,
 melted now
 To feed base hands with gold, and stop
 loud throats,
 Whose strength alone and clamor put
 such heart
 In Bothwell, that he swore to hang the
 man
 Who would not speak their banns at
 first, and now
 But utters them with lips that yet pro-
 test
 Of innocent blood and of adulterous
 bonds
 By force proclaimed, and fraudulent; and
 this Craig
 The townsmen love, and heed not that
 for craft
 Each day will Bothwell hear men
 preach, and show
 To them that speak all favor, and will
 sit
 A guest at burghers' boards unsum-
 moned; yet
 Men's hate more swells against him, to
 behold
 How by the queen he rides unbonneted,
 And she rebukes his too much courtesy;
 So that their world within doors and
 without
 Swells round them doubtfully toward
 storm, and sees
 This hot-brained helmsman in his own
 conceit
 Even here in port, who drifts indeed at
 sea.
Herries. Short time will wind this
 up: the secretary,
 Whose blood the queen would see not
 shed of him,
 Is slipped away for Stirling, there to join
 With Lindsay and the lords ere this
 combined,
 From whom I may not now divide my-
 self,
 On the child's party. Not a hand will
 stay
 Nor heart upon this side; the Hamil-
 tons,
 For their own ends that set this mar-
 riage on,

Will for those ends with no sad hearts
 behold
 At others' hands her imminent over-
 throw.
Melville. This was the archbishop's
 counsel, that annulled
 Last year's true marriage to procure the
 queen's,
 And even therein betray her. God
 mend all!
 But I misdoubt me lest the sun be set
 That looked upon the last of her good
 days.

SCENE XI. — THE SAME.

*The QUEEN and BOTHWELL; MARY
 BEATON and ARTHUR ERSKINE in
 attendance.*

Queen. Are you yet wroth?

Bothwell. Are you yet wise? to know
 If I be wroth, should less import than
 this

Which I would fain find of you.

Queen. By my life,
 I think I am but wise enough to know
 That witless I was ever.

Bothwell. Ay, but most,
 You mean, to wed me, that am graceless
 more

Than witless you that wedded, in men's
 eyes

Who justliest judge of either; yet, by
 God,

Had I not grace enough to match with
 you,

I must have less than in their minds
 I have

And tongues of them that curse me.
 But what grief

Wrings now your heart or whets your
 tongue, that strikes

When the heart stirs not?

Queen. Nay, no grief it is
 To be cut off from all men's company,
 Watched like a thief lest he break
 ward by night,

My chamber-door set round with men
 at-arms,

My steps and looks espied on, hands
 and feet

Fettered as 'twere with glances of
 strange eyes

That guard me lest I stray; my ways,
my words,

My very sleep, their subject.

Bothwell. You were wont

To walk more free; I wot you have
seen fair days

When you lived large i' the sun, and
had sweet tongues

To sing with yours, and haply lips and
eyes

To make song sweeter than the lute
may: now

'Tis hard that you sit here my woful
wife,

Who use you thus despitefully, that
yet

Was never queen so mated with a
groom

And so mishandled: have you said so?

Queen. I?

Bothwell. Who hath put these words
else in men's mouths, that prate

How you lie fast in prison? I did know
A woman's tongue keen as her faith

was light,
But faith so like the wind spake never

yet
With tongue so like a sword's point.

Queen. No, my lord?

'Tis well that I should hear so first of
you,

Who best may know the truth of your
worst word. •

Bothwell. Is it no truth that men so
speak, and you,

By speech or silence or by change of
face,

By piteous eyes or angry, give them
cause

To babble of your bonds? What
grace you show

Toward others is as doubt and hate of
me

In these our enemies' sight, who see it,
and swear

You are kept in ward here of my will,
and made,

Out of no trust or love but force and
fear,

Thrall to my hand. Why, being but
two days wed,

Must there be cause between us of dis-
pute

For such a thing as this man, in whose
name

I am crossed and slighted of your wan-
ton will?

Queen. If he be worth no more than
you conceive,

What grace I do him can hurt you?

Bothwell. I conceive!

Why, what worth is he with you, that I
should

Conceive the least thought of him?
Were I hurt,

Assure yourself it would be to his
death:

Lay that much to your heart.

Queen. My heart is killed.

I have not where to lay it.

Bothwell. Pray you, no tears.

I have seen you weep when dead men
were alive,

That, for your eye-drops wept their
hearts' blood out:

So will not I. You have done me fool-
ish wrong,

And haply cast your fame for food to
hounds

Whose teeth will strip it hour by hour
more bare

Whereon they have gnawed before.
Queen. What have I done?

Speak.

Bothwell. Nay, I will, because you
know not. Hark:

You are even too simple and harmless;
being man's wife,

Not now the first time, you should buy
more wit

Though with less innocence; you have
given a gift,

Out of your maiden singleness of soul
And eye most witless of misconstruing

eyes,
Where you should not: this is strange

truth to you,
But truth, God help us! that man's

horse who was
Your husband, and whose chattels,

place, and name
Lie in my hold I think now lawfully,

Whence none is like to wring them,
have you given

Out of my hand to one of whom fame
saith

That in the witness of a world-and
 which
 He wren I die must wear you, and my
 life
 Shall not see said a year for if your
 best
 Must be two husbands after me, and
 you
 Shall in your first lord's lifetime die by
 the
 Now, being but dead and leave it worth
 of these
 I would not have you die so red a death,
 but keep you from all fears of better
 dead
 Than of my love and arms: for would
 I might have
 I am not to me, as please you, to behold
 How strong this lay lord above the
 Arriveth
 Sit in your husband's saddle. Pardon
 me
 That with my jealous knowledge I con-
 found
 Your virgin sweet ignorance of men's
 minds,
 Ill thoughts and tongues unmannerly,
 that strike
 At the pure heart which dreams not on
 such harm:
 It is my love and care of your life's
 peace
 Makes me thus venturous to wage
 words with you,
 And put such troublous things in your
 fair mind,
 Whereof God wot you knew not; and
 to end,
 Take this much of me: live what life
 you may,
 Or die what death, while I have part
 in you,
 None shall have part with me; nor
 touch nor word,
 Nor eye nor hand, nor writing, nor one
 thought,
 The lightest that may hang upon a look,
 Shall man get of you that I know not
 of,
 And answer not upon him. Be you
 sure
 I am not of such fool's mould cast in
 flesh

As two-headed husbands: being no
 king,
 Nor any of things, but see that keep
 married
 My head but with my hand, and leave
 it to
 To tell you strings, and match you
 fitting the string,
 And stay and tither on a tripping
 tongue,
 But so in that we do make my word and
 said
 Keep time and rhyme together, say and
 say.
 Set this down in such record as you list,
 but keep it secret that you keep your
 word
 If that be changing: for by heaven and
 hell
 I swear to keep the word I give you
 fast
 As faith can hold it, that who thwarts
 me here,
 Or comes across my will's way in my
 wife's,
 Dies as a dog dies, doomless. Now,
 your pleasure:
 I prate no more.
Queen. Shall I be handled thus?
Bothwell. You have too much been
 handled otherwise:
 Now will I keep you from men's hands
 in mine,
 Or lack the use of these.
Queen. What, to strike me?
 You shall not need: give me a knife to
 strike,
 That I may let my life out in his eye,
 Or I will drown myself.
Bothwell. Why, choose again:
 I cross you not.
Queen. Give me a knife, I say.
Arthur Erskine. Make not our hearts
 bleed, madam, as they burn
 To hear what we hear silent.
Bothwell. Comfort her:
 You were her chamber-knight on
 David's day.
Arthur Erskine. My lord, the re-
 vrence that the queen's sight
 bears,
 And awe toward her, make me thus
 slow to set

My hand to do what work my heart
bids; else

I would not doubt to stand before your
grace,
And make such answer as her servant
may.

Queen. Forbear him, Arthur: nay,
and me; 'tis I

On whom all strokes first fall and sorest
smite,

Who most of all am shieldless, without
stay,

And look for no man's comfort. — Pray
you, sir,

If it be in your will that I cast off
This heavy life to lighten your life's
load

That now with mine is laden, let me
die

More queenlike than this dog's death
you denounce

Against the man that falls into your
hate;

Though not for love, yet shame, be-
cause I was

A queen that loved you: else you
should not seem

So royal in her sight whose eyes you
serve,

Nor she when I am dead with such
high heart

Behold you, nor with such glad lips
commend

As conqueror of me slain for her love's
sake

And servant of her living in your love.
Let me die therefore queenlike, and
your sword

Strike where your tongue hath struck;
though not so deep,

It shall suffice to cleave my heart and
end.

Bothwell. Hear you, my queen: if we
twain be one flesh,

I will not have this daintier part of it
Turn any timeless hand against itself

To hurt me, nor this fire which is your
tongue

Shoot any flame on me: no fuel am I
To burn and feed you; not a spark you
shed

Shall kindle me to ruin, but with my
foot

Rather will I tread out the light that
was

A firebrand for the death of many a
man

To light the pile whereon they burnt
alive.

What! have I taken it in my hand to
scorch

And not to light me? or hath it set
fire

To so few lives already, that who bears
Needs not to watch it warily and wake

When the night falls about him? Nay,
the man

Were twice the fool that these your
dead men were,

Who seeing as I have seen and in his
hand

Holding the fire I carry through the
dark

To be the beacon of my travelling days,
And shine upon them ended, should
not walk

With feet and eyes both heedful at
what hour,

By what light's leading, on what ground
he goes,

And toward what end. Be therefore
you content

To keep your flame's heat for your ene-
mies' bale,

And for your friend that large and lib-
eral light

That gave itself too freely, shot too
far,

Till it was closed as in a lantern up
To make my path plain to me; which
once lost,

The light goes out forever.

Queen. Yea, I know;
My life can be but light now to your
life,

And of no service else; or, if none
there,

Even as you say, must needs be
quenched; and would

The wind that now beats on it and the
sea

Had quenched it ere your breath, and
I gone out

With no man's blood behind me!

Bothwell. Come, be wise:
Our sun is not yet sunken.

Queen. No, not yet :
The sky must even wax redder than it
is
When that shall sink ; darkness and
smoke of hell,
Clouds that rain blood, and blast of
winds that wreck,
Shall be about it setting.

Bothwell. What ! your heart
Fails you now first that shrank not
when a man's
Might well at need have failed him ?

Queen. Ay, and no ;
It is the heart that fired me, fails my
heart ;
And as that bows beneath it, so doth
mine
Bend, and will break so surely.

Bothwell. Nay, not mine :
There is not weight yet on our adverse
part,
Fear not, to bend it.

Queen. Yet it fails me now.
I have leant too much my whole life's
weight on it
With all my soul's strength, and be-
neath the fraught
I hear it split and sunder. Let me
rest :

I would fain sleep a space now. Who
goes there ?

Mary Beaton. A suitor to behold
your majesty.

Queen. I will not see him. Who
should make suit to me ?
Who moves yet in this world so miser-
able

That I can comfort ? or what hand so
weak

It should be now my suppliant, or up-
lift

In prayer for help's sake to lay hold on
mine ?

What am I to give aid or alms, who
have

Nor alms nor aid at hand of them to
whom

I gave not some but all part of myself ?
I will not see him.

Mary Beaton. It is a woman.

Queen. Ay ?
But yet I think no queen ; and cannot
be

But therefore happier and more strong
than I.

Yet I will see what woman's face for
grief

Comes to seek help at mine ; if she be
mad,

Me may she teach to lose my wits and
woes,

And live more enviable than ye that yet
Have wit to know me wretched.

Enter JANE GORDON.

Who is this ?

Are you my suitor ?

Jane Gordon. I am she that was
Countess of Bothwell : now my name
again

Is that my father gave me.

Queen. Ay, no more ;
You are daughter yet and sister to
great earls,

And bear that honor blameless ; be it
enough ;

And tell me wherefore by that name
you come,

And with what suit, before me.

Jane Gordon. Even but this :

To look once on you, and to bid fare-
well,

Ere I fare forth from sight.

Queen. Farewell ; and yet

I know not who should in this world
fare well.

Is the word said ?

Jane Gordon. A little leave at last
I pray you give me : that I seek it
not

For love or envy toward my sometime
lord,

Or heart toward you disloyal now my
queen,

Let me not plead uncredited. I came
Surely with no good hope to no glad
end,

But with no thought so vile of will as
this,

To thrust between your hearts the care
of me,

Claim right or challenge pity, melt or
fret

Your eyes with forced compassion : I
did think

To have kissed your hand, and some
thing said for sign

I had come not of weak heart or evil will,
 But in good faith, to see how strong in love
 They stand whose joy makes joyless all my life,
 Whose loving leaves it loveless, and their wealth
 Feeds full upon my famine. Be not wroth:
 I speak not to rebuke you of my want,
 Or of my loss reprove you, that you take
 My crown of love to gild your crown of gold;
 I know what right you have, and take no shame
 To sit for your sake humbled, who being born
 A poor mean woman would not less have been
 By God's grace royal, and by visible seal
 A natural queen of women; but being crowned
 You make the throne imperial, and your hand
 Puts power into the sceptre; yea, this head
 Of its gold circlet takes not majesty,
 But gives it of its own; this may men see,
 And I deny not; nor is this but just,
 That I, who have no such honor born or given,
 Should have not either, if it please you not,
 That which I thought I had; the name I wore,
 The hand scarce yet a year since laid in mine,
 The eye that burned on mine as on a wife's,
 The lip that swore me faith, the heart that held
 No thought or throb wherein I had no part,
 Or heaved but with a traitor's breath, and beat
 With pulse but of a liar.

Bothwell. Ay, swore I so?

Why, this was truth last year then.

Queen. Truth, my lord?

What does the fire of such a word as this
 Between such lips but burn them, as mine ears
 Burn that must hear by your device and hers
 With what strange flatteries on her prompted lips
 This dame unwedded lifts her hand unringed
 To abash me with its show of faith, and make
 Your wife ashamed at sight of such a love
 As yet she bears you that is not your wife?

Bothwell. What devil should prick me to such empty proof
 And pride unprofitable? I pray you think

I am no such boy to boast of such a spoil
 As chamberers make their brag of.
 Let her speak,
 And part not as unfriends.

Queen. Madam, and you
 That thus renumber and resound his vows,

To what good end I know not, in our ear,—

What would you have of him whom your own will

Rose up to plead against as false, to break

His bonds that irked you, and unspeak the word

That held you hand in hand? Did you not pray

To be set free from bondage, and now turn

To question with the hand that you put off

If it did well to loose you?

Jane Gordon. Truly, no;

Nor will I question with your grace in this,

Whether by mine own will and un-compelled

I only would have put that hand away
 That I will say would yet have held mine fast

But for my frowardness and rancorous mind;

Let all this even be so; as he shall
 Who will say naught but with your
 Why, so will I. Yet ere I am gone,
 Oh, not my lord, but hers whose thrall
 My sometime friend and yet not enemy,
 So much breath of you as may do me
 I pray you witness for me how far forth
 And for what love's sake I took part
 Or gave consent to our devised divorce,
 And if this were for hate; for you
 How much of old time I have hated
 How bitter made my heart, what jeal-
 Set on mine envy toward you: spare
 To say if out of cold or cankered heart
 To be divided from you. Nay, forbear;
 Speak not, nor frown on me; you can-
 I was your loveless or disloyal wife,
 Or in my void bed on disconsolate
 Sought comfort but of tears: nor that
 Mine honor hurt of that which bruised
 And grudged to help you to mine own
 And lend you mine own hand to smite
 And make you by mine own mouth
 This that I did, and wherefore I did
 And if for love's or hate's sake, verily
 You shall not say you know not, and
 Shall blame me not to put you yet in
 Nor think it much that I make record

Of this that was between us: wherefore
 I take no shame at this my leave-taking
 To part as one that has not erred
 To love too little; this shall not be said
 That with poor spirit or with contracted
 I gave myself to love you, or was found
 Too mean of mind or sparing of my
 To cast for love the crown of love
 And when you bade refuse you for my
 Whom, had you bidden, with my
 I had thought not much to purchase
 But seeing nor blood nor all my body's
 Might buy you back to love me, I was
 That you should take them and my very
 To buy new love and life with. Sir,
 Ere we twain part—
Queen. What! are ye parted not?
 Between his lover and my lord I stand,
 And see them weep and wrangle ere
 And hold my peace for pity!
Jane Gordon. God shall judge
 If with pure heart and patience, or
 That burns and pines, I would have
 I crave but this much of your grace
 Make me at last not angry.
Queen. Have you held
 No counsel or communion with my lord
 Since — I am shamed that take upon
 Such inquisition. If you have aught
 I bid not nor forbid you.
Jane Gordon. Naught but this, —
 To unpledge my faith, unplight my

Set on his hand the seal by touch of mine

That sunders us.

Queen. You shall not take his hand.

Jane Gordon. I think not ever then to touch it more,

Nor now desire, who have seen with eyes more sad

More than I thought with sorrowing eyes to see

When I came hither: so this long last time

Farewell, my lord; and you, his queen, farewell.

Queen. Hath she made end? *While I have part in you,*

None shall have part with me; was this my lord,

Was this not you that said so?

Bothwell. Come, enough:

I am bound not to be baited of your tongues.

Queen. Bid her come back.

Bothwell. What! are you foolish? think

You twain shall look in either's eyes no more.

Queen. Why should I look in yours to find her there?

For there she sits as in a mirror shown
By the love's light enkindled from your heart,

That flashed but on me like a fen-fire lit
To lure me to my grave's edge, whence I fall

Deep as the pit of hell; but yet for shame

Deny not her to me as me to her,
Me that have known this ever, but lacked heart

To put the thing to use I knew; and now

For both our sakes who have loved you, play not false

But with one love at once; take up your love

And wear it as a garland in men's sight,

For it becomes you: if you love me not,

You have lied by this enough; speak truth, shake hands,

Loose hearts, and leave me.

Bothwell. Vex not me too long,
Vexing your own heart thus with vanity;

Take up your wisdom that you have at will,

And wear it as a sword in danger's sight

That now looks hard upon us. Mine you are,

Love me or love not, trust me not or trust,

As yours am I; and even as I in you,
Have faith in me, no less nor further: then

We shall have trust enough on either part

To build a wall about us at whose foot

That sea of iron swayed by winds of war

Shall break in foam like blood; and hurled once back,

The hearts and swords of all our enemies fallen

Lie where they fell forever. Know but this,

And care not what is unknown else: we twain

Have wrought not out this fortune that we have,

Nor made us way to such an hour and power,

To let men take and break it, while as fools

We kiss and brawl and cry and kiss again,

And wot not when they smite. For these next days,

We will behold the triumph held at Leith

And pageant of a sea-fight as set forth
With open face and spirit of joyousness,

To fix this faith in all men's eyes and minds,

That while life lives we stand indissoluble:

Then shall you send out for your child again

Forth of Lord Mar's good keeping, that your heart

May here have comfort in his present sight;

<p>So shall all these who make his name their sword Lie weaponless within our hand and hold, Who' are drawn in one against us, or prepare, While we delay, for Stirling; where by this, I am certified on faith of trusty men, Argyle is met with Morton, our good friends That served us for their turn, with some that helped To make our match and some that would have marred, Once several-souled, now in their envies one, As Lindsay, Athol, Herries; and to these Maitland is fled, your friend that must not bleed, Your counsellor is stolen away and lives To whet his wit against you; but my- self, When we have shown us to the people, and seen What eye they turn upon our marriage feast, Will ride to Melrose, and raise up from sleep Their hardy hearts whom now mine unfriends there Hold in subjection; Herries nor Lord Hume Nor Maxwell shall have power to tie them up When I shall bid them forth, and all the march Shall rise beneath us as with swell o' the sea And wash of thickening waters when the wind Makes the sea's heart leap with such might of joy As hurls its waves together; there shall we Ride on their backs as warriors, and our ship Dance high toward harbor. Put but on the spirit You had in all times that beset your peace,</p>	<p>Since you came home, with danger; in those wars That made the first years clamorous of your reign, And in this past and perilous year of ours Where you lacked never heart. Be seen again The royal thing men saw you; these your friends Shall look more friendly on our wedded faith Seeing no more discord of our days to be, And our bold borderers with one heart on fire Burn in your warlike safeguard, once to strike And end all enemies' quarrel. When we part, At Borthwick Castle shall you look for me, Where I will gather friends more fain of fight Than all our foes may muster. <i>Queen.</i> Sir, so be it; But now my heart is lower than once it was, And will not sit, I think, again so high, Though my days turn more prosperous than I deem. But let that be.—Come, friends, and look not sad Though I look sadder; make what cheer we may, For festival or fight, or shine or shower, I will not fail you yet. God give me heart, That never so much lacked it! yea, he shall, Or I will make it out of mine own fears, And with my feebleness increase my force, And build my hope the higher that joy lies low Till all be lost and won.—Lead you, my lord, And fear not but I follow: I have wept When I should laugh, and laughed when I should weep, And now live humbler than I thought to be;</p>
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I ask not of your love, but of mine own
I have yet left to give. Come, we will
see

These pageants or these enemies; my
heart

Shall look alike on either. Be not
wroth;

I will be merry while I live, and die
When I have leave. My spirit is sick :
would God

We were now met at Borthwick, with
men's spears

And noise of friends about us; friend
or foe,

I care not whether; here I am sore at
heart,

As one that cannot wholly wake nor
sleep

Till death receive or life relieve me.
Come;

We should be glad now: let the world
take note

We are glad in spite and sight of enmi-
ties

That are but worth the hour they take
to quell.

SCENE XII. — STIRLING CASTLE.

MATTLAND and LINDSAY.

Lindsay. Is there such breach be-
tween them? why, men said,

When they would ride through Edin-
burgh, and he

Bareheaded at her bridle, she would
take

By force and thrust his cap upon his
head

With loving might and laughing; and
at Leith

They saw the false fight on the waters
join,

And mid-May pageants that shone down
the sun,

As with glad eyes of lovers newly wed
Whose hearts were of the revel; and
so soon

Are hearts and eyes divided?
Maitland. Not an hour

May she draw breath but in his eye,
nor see

But whom he shall give entrance; in
her sight

He thought to have slain me, but she
came between,

And set for shield her bosom to his
sword

In her own chamber: so each day and
night

By violent act or viler word than deed
He turns her eyes to water-springs of
tears,

Who leaves not yet to love him; such
strong hold

By flesh or spirit or either made one fire
Hath such men's love on women made
as she.

For no foul speech, I think, nor strokes
nor shame

Would she go from him, but to keep
him fast

Would burn the world with fire; and
no force less

Shall burn their bonds in sunder.
Lindsay. We will bring

And kindle it in their sight. They are
southward fled

To meet at Borthwick: thither we de-
sign,

To raise the Merse with Hume, and
with Lord Mar

And with the Douglas' following bind
them round,

And take them in one snare, whence
one of these

Shall creep not forth with life or limb
that feels

No hound's fang fasten on it; and his
mate

Shall see their feet smoke with his
slaughtered blood.

SCENE XIII. — BORTHWICK CASTLE.

*The QUEEN and BOTHWELL; MARY
BEATON in attendance.*

Queen. You should be hence again :
since you came in

From Melrose with no levies at your
back,

We have heard no news of friends, and
hear but now

That we are ringed with Morton's folk
about;

How shall he not have laid unhappy
hand

Upon your messenger that bare our
 word
 Of summons to the archbishop and
 your friend
 Balfour to be with Huntley at our side?
Bothwell. Ay, he is trapped that bore
 my letters hence,
 I doubt not; none have feet to run
 aright,
 Eyes to see true, hands to bring help,
 but they
 That move them to our ruin. This
 Balfour,
 Whom I laid trust on since our fiery
 night
 As on a true man bound of force to me,
 Has fallen in conference and device of
 plots,
 I hear, with that lean limb of policy
 That loves me not, James Melville, by
 whose mouth
 Being warned I meant to take out of
 his hand
 The castle-keys of Edinburgh, and give
 To one my closer kinsman for more
 trust.
 He has made him friends of ancient
 foes, and seeks,
 By no less service than pursuit of them
 Who slew the king your husband, to
 deserve
 Their favor who are risen of honest
 heart
 But to chastise these slayers, of whom
 God wot
 Themselves were none, nor he that
 hunts with them
 Upon the trail of treason. Oh, your
 lords
 Are worthy friends and enemies, and
 their tongues
 As trusty as their hands are innocent,
 When they see time to turn.
Queen. I would their lives
 Lay all between my lips, and with one
 breath
 I might cut all theirs off! nor tongue
 nor hand
 Should rise of them against us, to deny
 Their work disclaimed when done.
 What slaves are these
 That make their hands red with men's
 secret blood,
 And with their tongues would lick them
 white, and wash
 The sanguine grain out with false froth
 of words
 From lying lips that kissed the dead to
 death,
 And now cry vengeance for him? But,
 my lord,
 Make you haste hence to-night ere they
 be here
 That if we tarry will beset us; I
 Should hang but as a fetter on your
 foot,
 Which should pass free forth to Dun-
 bar, and raise
 With sound even of its tread and for-
 ward speed
 The force of all the border.
Bothwell. Where I go,
 There shall you not be far to find: to-
 night
 I will sleep here.
Queen. God give you rest and
 strength,
 To make that heart which is the lord
 of mine
 Fresh as the spirit of sunrise! for last
 night
 You slept not well.
Bothwell. No; I had dreams, that
 am
 No natural dreamer; I will sleep apart,
 With Cranston's son to lie at hand, or
 wait
 If I lack service.
Queen. Nay, let me be there:
 I will not weary you with speech, nor
 break
 Your sleep with servile and officious
 watch,
 But sit and keep it as a jewel is kept
 That is more dear than eyesight to its
 lord,
 Or as mine eyes can keep not now their
 own,
 Now slumber sits far from them. *Let*
 me wake.
Bothwell. No, not with me.
Queen. What, lest I trouble you?
 Should my being there put dreams in
 you again,
 To cross your sleep with me?
Bothwell. Belike it might.

Queen. Nay, I was no part of your
dreams, I think;
You dream not on me waking nor
asleep,
But if you dream on no face else nor
mine,
I will be yet content.
Bothwell. Well, so it was,
I dreamt at once of either; yet I know
not
Why I should tell my dream. Your
lord that was,
They say, would prattle of his fears by
night
And faces of false peril: I was never
So loath by day to face what fear I
might
As to be sick in darkness; but this
dream
I would not see again. Yet was it
naught;
I seemed to stand between two gulfs of
sea
On a dark strait of rock; and at my foot
The ship that bore me broken; and
there came
Out of the waves' breach crying of
broken men
And sound of splintering planks, and
all the hull
Shattered and strewn in pieces; and
my head
Was as my feet and hands, bare, and
the storm
Blew hard with all its heart upon me;
then
Came you, a face with weeping eyes,
and hair -
Half glimmering with a broken crown
that shone
Red as of molten iron; but your limbs
Were swathed about and shrouded out
of sight,
Or shown but as things shapeless that
the bier
Shows ready for the grave; only the
head
Floated, with eyes fast on me, and be-
neath
A bloodlike thread dividing the bare
throat
As with a needle's breadth, but all be-
low
Was muffled as with cerecloths; and
the eyes
Wept; then came one we wot of, clad
in black,
And smiling, and laid hands on me
more cold
Than is a snake's kiss or the grave's,
and thrust
Between that severed head, weeping
and crowned,
That mourned upon me, and mine eyes
that watched,
Her own strange head wrapped widow-
like and wan
In habit of one sorrowing, but with lips
That laughed to kiss me; and there-
with at once
Your face as water flowed out of my
sight,
And on mine own I felt as drops of
blood
Falling, but if your tears they were, or
hers,
Or either's blood, I knew not; on mine
eyes
The great dead night shut doorwise
like a wall,
And in mine ears there sprang a noise
of chains,
And teeth ground hard of prison-grates
that jarred
And split as 'twere with sound my
heart, which was
As ice that cleaves in sunder: for there
came
Through that black breathless air an
iron note
Of locks that shut and sounded, and
being dumb
There left me quick entombed in stone,
and hid
Too deep for the day's eyeshot; then
I woke
With the sea's roaring and the wind's
by night
Fresh in my sense, and on my travail-
ing heart
A weight of walls and floors and upper
earth
That held me down below the breach
o' the sea
Where its tide's wash kept witness
overhead

How went the scornful days and nights
 above,
 Where men forgot me, and the living
 sun
 As a dead dog passed over.
Queen. What, alone?
 She went not with you living under-
 ground
 To sit in chains and hear the sea break?
 Nay,
 She would not cast you off. This was
 your love, —
 Your love of her and need of her sweet
 sight,
 That brought her so upon your sleep,
 and made
 Your sense so fearful of all things but
 this,
 And all else heard and seen so terrible
 But her face only: she should comfort
 you,
 Whom I should bring to wreck; why,
 so she said,
 Saying how she had loved you whom I
 loved not; yea,
 Her eyes were sad, she said, that saw
 forsooth
 So little love between us: this sweet
 word,
 This word of hers at parting, this it
 was
 Of which your dream was fashioned, to
 give sign
 How firm she sits and fast yet in your
 heart,
 Where I was never.
Bothwell. Well, how be it soe'er,
 I would not dream again this dead
 dream out
 For less than kingly waking: so good
 night,
 For I will sleep alone.
Queen. No, with my heart,
 That lies down with you though it
 sleeps not. Go,
 And dream of no less loving prayer
 than mine
 That calls on God for sleep to comfort
 you,
 And keep your heart from sense of
 aught more hard
 Than her great love who made it.

[Exit BOTHWELL.]

'Tis a night
 That puts our France into my mind:
 even here
 By those warm stars a man might call
 it June,
 Were such nights many; their same
 flower-bright eyes
 Look not more fair on Paris, that mine
 own
 Again shall hardly look on. Is it not
 strange
 That in this gray land and these griev-
 ous hours
 I should so find my spirit and soul
 transformed
 And fallen in love with pain, my heart
 that was
 Changed and made humble to his love-
 less words
 And force as of a master? By my
 faith,
 That was till now fixed never, and made
 as fire
 To stand a sunlike star in love's live
 heaven, —
 A heaven found one in hue and heat
 with hell, —
 I had rather be mis-handled as I am
 Of this first man that ever bound me
 fast,
 Than worshipped through the world
 with breaking hearts
 That gave their blood for worship. I
 am glad
 He sometime should misuse me; else I
 think
 I had not known if I could love or
 no.
 If you could love man with my heart
 as now,
 You would not mock nor marvel.
Mary Beaton. No, not then.
Queen. It is not in your heart: there
 lies not power
 In you to be for evil end or good
 The strange thing that is I.
Mary Beaton. There does not, no,
 Nor can lie ever: could I love at all,
 It were but as mean women, meanly;
 so
 I do the best to love not.
Queen. Hark! what noise?
 Look forth and see.

Mary Beaton. A sound of men and steeds;

The ring is round us; hark, the cry of Hume,

There Lindsay, and there Mar!

Queen. Call up my lord:

I will not go to vex him; but do you Haste and awake them.

[*Exit* MARY BEATON.

Be it not in mine eyes

That he first sees death risen upon his sleep,

If we must die; being started out of rest,

If he should curse me, were my heart not slain

With the opening of his eyes in wrath on mine?

Re-enter MARY BEATON.

Mary Beaton. My lord is raised and fled; but in the press

The lord of Cranston's son that slept with him

Is fallen by flight into the enemy's hands,

Who cry out for him yet as hounds that quest,

And roar as on their quarry.

Queen. Fled, and safe?

Mary Beaton. Ay, past their hands' reach that had rent him else;

Be sure he is forth, and free, or you should hear

More triumph in these cries.

Queen. God, thou art good!

Fling wide the window: I will know of them

If they be come to slay me. — What, my lords!

Are all these men of mine that throng by night

To make such show of service, and present

Strange offices of duty? Where are ye That are chief ushers to their turbulent love

Who come thus riotously to proffer it? Which is first here? a bold man should he be

That takes unbidden on him such desert —

Let me not say, a traitor.

Lindsay (without). Where is he,

The traitor that we seek? for here is none

But in your bosom.

Queen. Here then ends your search, For here am I; and traitors near enough

I see to pierce the bosom that they seek,

Where never shall be treason till its blood

Be spilt by hands of traitors that till now

Durst never rise so near it.

Lindsay. Give him forth, Or we will have these walls down.

Queen. What, with words?

Is there such blast of trumpets in your breath

As shook the towers down of the foes of God

At the seventh sounding? yet we stand and laugh

That hear such brave breath blown and stormlike speech

Fly round our ears: is it because your war,

My lords, is waged with women, that ye make

Such woman's war on us?

Mar (without). Madam, we come To take you from his hand that is your shame,

And on his shameful head revenge that blood

Which was shed guiltless; hither was he fled,

We know, into your shelter: yield him up,

Ere yet worse come than what hath worst come yet

Queen. There is none here to die by you but I,

And none to mock you dying. Take all your swords;

It is a woman that they came to slay, And that contemns them: go not back for fear;

Pluck up your hearts; one valiant stroke or twain,

And ye are perfect of your work, and I Forever quit of treason; and I swear,

By God's and by his mother's name and mine,

Except ye slay me presently, to have
Such vengeance of you and my traitors
all

As the loud world shall ring with; so
to-night

Be counselled, and prevent me, that am
here

Yet in your hands; if ye dare slay me
not,

Ye are dead now here already in my
doom:

Take heart, and live to mock it.

Mar. He is fled.

Here boots us not to tarry, nor change
words

With her that hath such vantage as to
know

We have missed our prize and purpose
here, which was

To take the traitor that is fled, and
bring

Whither we now ride foiled, to Edin-
burgh,

Thence to return upon them.

Lindsay. Hear yet once:

'You, madam, till our day be set of doom,
Look to the adulterer's head that hence
is flown,

Whose shame should now stand redder
in your face

Than blushes on his hand your hus-
band's blood,

And cleave more fast; for that dead
lord's revenge

Will we make proclamation, and raise
up

The streets and stones for vengeance
of your town

That sits yet sullied with bloodguilt-
ness

Till judgment make it clean; whose
walls to-night

Myself, for fault of better, ere I sleep
Will scale though gates be fastened,
and therein

Bring back and stablish justice that
shall be

A memory to the world and unborn
men

Of murder and adultery.

Queen. Good my lord,

We thank you for the care you have
and pains

To speak before you smite; and that
so long

The deed can follow not on the swift
word

For lack of spirit and breath to mate
with it;

So that they know who hear your threat
betimes

What fear it bears and danger, and for
fear

Take counsel to forestall it. Make
good speed;

For if your steed be shod but with fleet
speech,

Ere you shall stride the wall of our
good town

Its foot may trip upon a traitor's grave.

Mary Beaton. They ride fast yet:
hear you their starting cry?

Queen. For each vile word and ven-
omous breath of theirs,

I will desire at my lord's hand a head
When he shall bring them bound before
my foot.

If thou hast counsel in thee, serve me
now:

I must be forth, and masked in such
close wise

As may convey me secret to his side
Whence till our wars be done I will
not part

Nor then in peace forever: in this
shape

I should ride liable to all eyes and
hands

That might waylay me flying; but I
will play

As in a masque for pastime, and put
on

A horseboy's habit, or some meaner
man's

That wears but servant's steel upon his
thigh

And on his sleeve the badge but of a
groom,

And so pass noteless through toward
Haddington,

Whither my lord had mind to flee at
need,

And there expect me. Come: the
night wears out;

The shifting wind is sharper than it
was,

And the stars falter. Help me to put off
 This outward coil of woman; my heart
 beats
 Fast as for fear a coward's might beat,
 for joy
 That spurs it forth by night on warriors'
 ways,
 And stings it with sharp hope to find
 his face
 That shall look loving on me, and with
 smiles
 Mock the false form and cheer the con-
 stant heart
 That for his love's sake would be man's
 indeed.

ACT IV.—JOHN KNOX.

Time: June 15 and 16, 1567.

SCENE I.—CARBERRY HILL.

The QUEEN, BOTHWELL, and SOLDIERS.

Queen. I would this field where fate
 and we must cross
 Were other than it is; but for this
 thought,
 On what ill night some score of years
 ago
 Here lay our enemy's force before that
 fight
 Which made next day the face of Scot-
 land red,
 And trod her strength down under
 English feet,
 I would not shrink in this wide eye of
 dawn,
 In the fair front of such a summer's
 day,
 To meet the mailed face of my traitors'
 host
 And with bared brows outbrave it.
Bothwell. Keep that heart,
 For fear we need it. Look beyond the
 bridge
 There at this hill's foot on the western
 bank,
 How strong they stand under the gather-
 ing light:
 I have not seen a battle fairer set
 Or in French fields, or these our thirst-
 ier lands,
 That feed unslaked on blood.

Queen. They grow now green,—
 These hills and meadows that with
 slain men's lives
 Have fed the flocks of war; come ten
 years yet,
 And, though this day should drench
 them with more death
 Than that day's battle, not a stain shall
 stand
 On their fresh face for witness. Had
 God pleased
 To set a strong man armed with hands
 to fight,
 And on his head his heritage to keep,
 Sworded and crowned a king, in my sad
 stead,
 To fill the place I had not might to
 hold;
 And for the child then bitterly brought
 forth,
 Unseasonable, that being but woman
 born
 Broke with the news her father's heart,
 who died
 Desperate in her of comfort, had he
 sent
 The warrior that I would be, and in
 time
 To look with aweless eye on that day's
 fight
 That reddened with the ruin of our
 hopes
 The hour that rocked my cradle,— who
 shall say
 The scathe of Pinkie Cleugh and all
 that blood
 Had made the memory so unfortunate
 Of that which was my birth-time? Be-
 ing a man,
 And timelier born to better hap than
 mine,
 I might have set upon that iron day
 Another mark than signs it in our sight
 Red with reproach forever.
Bothwell. Ay, my queen?
 These four nights gone, you met me
 soldier-like
 Escaped from Borthwick, whence I
 brought you in,
 Three darkling hours past midnight, to
 Dunbar,
 Where you put off that sheath of fight-
 ing man

For this poor woman's likeness yet you
 wear,
 Wherein you rode with your six hundred men
 To meet at Haddington but two days
 since
 These sixteen hundred border folk I
 led,
 And pass with me to Seyton: did you
 find
 Your life more light in you, or higher
 your heart,
 Inside that habit than this woman's
 coat
 That sits so short upon you?

Queen. By my life,
 I had forgot by this to be ashamed
 Of the strange shape I ride in, but
 your tongue
 Smites my cheek red as is this scanted
 weed
 Wherein I mask my queenship; yet
 God knows
 I had liefer ride thus forth toward such
 a day
 Than hide my sick heart and its fears
 at home
 In kinglier garments than this mask of
 mine,
 Thus with my kirtle kilted to the knee
 Like girls that ride in poor folks' bal-
 lads forth
 For love's sake and for danger's less
 than mine.
 Yet had I rather as your henchman ride
 At your right hand, and hear your
 bridle ring,
 Than sit thus womanly to watch men
 strike.

Bothwell. There will be parleying
 first: I have word of this,
 That they set forth at heaviest of the
 night
 From Edinburgh to cross our march
 betimes,
 And by the French ambassador your
 friend
 At Musselburgh were overtaken,
 whence
 We look for news by him what hearts
 they bear,
 What power, and what intent; he hath
 ta'en on him

To stand between our parts as mediator
 And bear the burden of our doubtful
 peace;

We must fight mouth to mouth ere
 hand to hand,
 But the clean steel must end it.

Queen. Now would God
 I had but one day's manhood, and
 might stand

As king in arms against this battle's
 breach

A twelve-hours' soldier, and my life to
 come

Be bounded as a woman's! all those
 days

That must die darkling should not yet
 put out

The fiery memory and the light of joy
 That out of this had lightened, and its
 heat

Should burn in them for witness left
 behind

On those piled ashes of my latter life.
 O God, for one good hour of man, and
 then

Sleep or a crown forever!

Bothwell. By God's light,
 The man that had no joy to strike for
 you

Were such a worm as God yet never
 made

For men to tread on. Kiss me: by
 your eyes

And fiery lips that make my heart's
 blood hot,

I swear to take this signet of your kiss
 As far into the fight as man may bear,

And strike as twq men in mine arm
 and stroke

Struck with one sense and spirit.

Queen. If I might change
 But this day with you in your stead to
 strike,

And you look on me fighting, as for
 me

You have fought ere this last heat so
 many a prize,

Or for your own hand ere your own
 was mine,

I would pray God for naught again
 alive.

But since my heart can strike not in my
 hand,

Fight you for me; put on my heart to
yours,
And let the might of both enforce your
arm
With more than its own manhood and
that strength

Which is your natural glory.

Bothwell. Sweet, I think,

When we have rid through this day's
wrath, if God

Shall give us peace and kingdom and
long life,

And make them fruitful to us, we shall
bring forth

A brood of kings as lions. Now in
brief

If this shall be, or shall not, may we
know;

For look where yonder, facing to the
sun

Comes up to us-ward from the under
field

One with a flag of message; in mine
eye

It is the Frenchman.

Queen. I will meet him here;

Here will I sit upon this rock for
throne,

And give such audience as my fortune
may, —

Either the last that shall salute me
queen,

Or first of my new reign, that from this
day

Shall fearfully begin for them whose
fear

Till now has held me shackled, and my
will

Confined of theirs unqueenly.

Bothwell. I meantime

Will see our line in order; for this
truce

Must hold not long; I would our hosts
should meet

Before the heat strikes of the middle
day,

And this June sun drop on our soldiers'
heads

Or shoot their eyes out.

[*Exit.*

Queen. If God give us peace!

Yet, though he give and we twain see
good days,

I would not lose for many fortunate
years,

And empire ringed with smooth secu-
rity,

The sharp and dangerous draught of
this delight

That out of chance and peril and keen
fear

Springs as the wine out of the trampled
grape

To make this hour sweet to my lips,
and bid

My dancing heart be like a wave in the
sun

When the sea sways between the sun
and wind

As my sense now between the fears
and hopes

That die to-day forever. Oh! this doubt
That is not helpless, but has armor on

And hands to fight with, has more joy
withal,

And puts more spirit into the flesh of
life,

More heart into the blood, and light in
the eyes,

Than the utter hour of triumph, and
the fight

More than the prize is worth man's
prizing; yea,

For when all's won, all's done, and
naught to do

Is as a chain on him that with void
hands

Sits pleasureless and painless. I had
rather

Have looked on Actium with Mark
Antony

Than bound him fast on Cydnus. O
my hour!

Be good to me, as even for the doubt's
sake

More than safe life I love thee; yet
would choose

Not now to know, though I might see
the end,

If thou wilt be good to me; do thy
work,

Have thine own end; and, be thou bad
or good,

Thou shalt nor smite nor crown a
queen in heart

Found lesser than her fortune.

Enter DU CROC.

Now, my lord,
What is their will who by such sove-
reign show
Should be my lords indeed? if you
that came
'Twi't crown and crown ambassador
pass now
Between our camps on message: but
this day
Shall leave in Scotland but one sove-
reignty
To see that sun sink.

Du Croc. Madam, from the lords
I come on errand but for love and fear
That move me toward your highness;
on whose part
I reasoning with them of their faith to
you,
And bond wherein their loyalties should
live,
By counsel of the Laird of Lethington,
Was charged to bear you from them
present word
For what they stand against your sight
in arms,
And will not but by force of yours
dissolve
Till it be granted.

Queen. Speak, my lord: I know
Your heart is whole and noble as their
faith
Is flawed and rotten; no disloyal word
Shall make your tongue disloyal in
mine ear,
Speaking for them.

Du Croc. This is their whole de-
mand:
That from the bloody hand which holds
your own
You pluck it forth, and cast him from
your sight
To judgment, who now stands through
you secure,
And makes his weapon of your
wounded name,
And of your shame his armor; and to
him
They offer fight with equal hand to
hand,
Of noble seconds in what sum he will
To match in blood and number with
his own,

If so he list to meet their chosen of
men
In personal battle, backed with less or
more
Or singly sworded; but this much they
swear, —
They had rather make their beds in the
earth alive
Than yet sit still and let this evil be.
And on your own part I beseech your
grace,
Set not your heart against the hearts of
these,
Lest it be broken of them, but betimes
Call yet to mind what grief and shame
will be
Among your friends in France and all
our part
To see you so with this man's hap in-
wound
That in his fall you cast yourself away,
And hand in hand run on with him to
death.

Queen. They are all forsworn that
seek his death: all they
With these blown tongues now quest-
ing for his blood
By judgment set him free as inno-
cence,
And now take back the doom they
gave, and turn
On their own heads the lie: devise
such shame
As lewd folk loathe, to gird themselves
withal,
And wear it for a jewel; seek and set
The name of liar upon them like a
crown,
And bind about them as a coat and
cloak
Plain treason and unguiled infamy,
Bare as a beggar; let them sue for
grace,
Kneel here and ask me favor; save as
thus
I treat not with them. Say how I sit
here,
In this mean raiment, on this naked
stone,
Their queen to judge them, and with
heart to weigh
Their fault against my mercy; which
yet once,

Though hardly their submission may
deserve,

Say, haply they may find.

Re-enter BOTHWELL.

Bothwell. Good day, my lord.

You look far off upon me; by your
brow

And strange-eyed salutation I may read
The burden of your this day's embassy.

Is it but I whom all these ranked in
arms

Are come against to battle?

Du Croc. Ay, my lord:

No hand is raised there dangerous to
the queen,

Nor thought of heart not loyal.

Bothwell. Why to me?

What hurt have I done to them? none
of these

But would be gladly in my place, who
had

The heart to seek it; 'tis the braver
man

That ever fortune follows: what I hold
I have won not basely, but from forth
her hand

Have ta'en if manlike, and with spirit
as good

Have girt me to maintain it. For my
part,

I seek no bloodshed, but in single field
Will meet with whom their lot shall

fall upon
That shall be found fair champion on
their part

To bear the general quarrel; and to
this

My state and present name shall be no
bar,

But the queen's consort as her man
shall fight

In any good cause simply with God's
help

With any sword that shames not mine
to meet.

Queen. It is my cause: me must they
strike, or none;

Myself am all the quarrel; let them
yield,

Or give me battle.

Bothwell. Then, no need of words:

Let but your excellency stand here
by,

And see the show as once that envoy
bound

'Twixt Hannibal and Scipio; by God's
grace

This too shall be worth sight and good
report

If he not fail us.

Du Croc. Madam, with rent heart

Must I take leave, then, of you.

Queen. Sir, farewell.

I pray you, say not that you saw me
weep:

These tears are not to turn the sword's
edge soft,

Nor made of fear nor pity; but my
heart

Holds no more rule on my rebellious
eyes

Than truth on those my traitors; yet I
trust

Again to bring both under.

[*Exit DU CROC.*]

Bothwell. We must fight;

Yet had I rather take it on mine hand
Than dare the general field.

Queen. No, for God's love.

Bothwell. God hath not so much
love of us to serve;

Nor would I wager on his head to-
day

That he shall fight upon our side.
Look there!

They are at point to cross; even now
you see

The first glint on them stirring of the
sun

As they set forth to make by the eastern
bank

Along the meadows edgeways towards
Dalkeith

Before they turn in wheel, and take the
hills;

I see their bent of battle; yet we keep
The slopes and crest here with our

covering lines

If they stand fast.

Queen. What, have you fear of that?

Bothwell. I cannot tell. The day
grows fiery hot:

I would we might close in at once, and
strike

Before the noon burn; all the pause we
make,

Who stand here idle watchers till they
 join,
 Takes off some heart from us for weariness,
 And gives us doubt; I would the field
 were set.

Queen. Why should not we that wait
 for them and chafe
 Break rather on them coming, and
 brush off
 Their gathering muster from the hill-
 skirts there
 With one sheer stroke of battle as from
 heaven,
 Right on them hurling down with all
 our host
 Out of these heights ere they made
 head below?

Bothwell. No, my sweet captain: we
 must hold this fast,
 This height of vantage, and keep close
 our ranks
 As I have ranged in order: see again,
 How they sweep round, and settle fast
 in file
 There on the ridge of Cowsland, with
 their backs
 Turned on the sun that climbs toward
 noon too fast,
 And in their front that hollow gap of
 hill
 Three crossbow-shots across; so far
 apart
 We look upon each other for a
 breath,
 And hold our hands from battle; but
 you see
 How soon both sides must lash to-
 gether: yea,
 I would we might not hold off yet an
 hour,
 But close at once, and end.

Queen. That burgh below,
 Is it not Preston Pans? These hills
 are set
 As stages for the show of such high
 game
 As is played out for God's content
 on earth
 Between men's kings and kingdoms;
 yet I think
 He that beholds hath no such joy o' the
 game

As he that plays, nor can the joy be
 known
 Save of man only, that man has to
 play
 When the die's throw rings death for
 him or life.
 How clear the wind strikes from the
 mounting sun!
 I am glad at heart the day we have
 of fight
 Should look thus lively on both sides
 that meet
 Beneath so large an open eye of heaven.
 The wind and sun are in my blood;
 I feel
 Their fire and motion in me like a
 breath
 That makes the heart leap. Dear, I
 too have read
 The tale of Rome whence lightly you
 chose out
 A likeness for us; but the parts we
 bear,
 We are to play them with a difference,
 take
 A fairer end upon us though we fall
 Than they that in their hazard were
 most like
 To this our imminent fortune: had I
 been
 She for whose lips love let the round
 world fall,
 And all man's empire founder, on that
 day
 When earth's whole strengths met on
 the warring sea,
 And side with side clashed of the king-
 domed world,
 I had not given my galleys wings for
 fear
 To bear me out of the eye of battle,
 nor
 Put space of flight between me and my
 love,
 More than I think on this wave's edge
 that foams
 To leave our chance unshipwrecked, or
 forsake
 My more imperial Antony.

Bothwell. Would that now
 We stood less near their hazard! on
 our part
 I fear to see the lines already melt

If we hold longer off, and this firm
front
Unfix itself and with no stroke dis-
solve
As snows in summer: half my folk by
this
For thirst are fallen upon the wine-
casks there
We brought from Seyton; and for those
that stand,
We have not half their hearts upon our
side
Whose hands are armed to uphold it.
I must fight
With whom they choose, and take upon
my hand
The day with all its issue: if our cause
Be set upon the general cast of fight,
It is but lost. Let messengers be sent
To know of the enemy if his challenge
hold
Which I stand armed to answer; but
no Scot
Shall bear the message and betray our
need:
Two Frenchmen of your guard shall
cross, and bring
Their fighter's name back that my sword
must know,
And we twain meet, and end it in fair
field
Between these ranks; and for my single
part,
I am glad the chance should hang but
on my hand,
And my sole stroke determine the dim
war
That flags yet in the dark and doubt of
fate
Till mine arm fix it fast, and in God's
sight
Confirm and close the chapter of it.
Come,
Choose you your envoys.
Queen. Nay, choose you the man
That you will fight with; let him be
not one
Who had no part with us in Darnley's
blood,
So God shall strike not on his unjust
side
Who fights against you.
Bothwell. Faith, if God were judge,

He should not do us right to approve
their cause
Who helped us to that slaying, and in
its name
Take on them now to accuse us, and
appeal
As guiltless to him against their proper
deed
And this right hand that wrought but
with their will;
Wherefore, so far forth as it hangs on
God,
From such a champion I should bear
the bell,
If he be righteous; which to assure you
of,
That even for God's sake you may feel
no fear,
Let Morton meet me.
Queen. Oh, that two-tongued knave!
The worst of all my traitors, whom I
spared
And should have slain when you had
brought him home
To help despatch his friend that had
been! Nay,
Him shall you meet not: he shall die
no death
So brave as by your sword; the axe
thinks long
To clasp his cursed neck; your hand,
dear lord,
Shall not redeem it.
Bothwell. Come, content you, sweet;
Him I must meet, or other; and my-
self
Care not if one that struck with us it be
Or one that struck not; only for your
ease,
To make you trustful for God's judg-
ment's sake
And confident of justice, I thought well
To choose a man of counsel with us
then,
And on this challenge fight with him,
that God
Might witness with us of his treacherous
cause
If I should win the field; but, by this
hand,
I put more trust in it and in my sword
Than in God's hand or judgment. Have
no fear:

What is our cause you know, and in
 what right
 We stand here armed; vex not your
 constant heart
 To seek for help or warrant more than
 this,
 Which if it cannot stand us yet in stead
 It shall avail not to devise fresh means
 To underprop with prayer and trust in
 God,
 And stay our souls with footless faith
 or hope
 That other might will aid our right
 than ours.
 Here shall we try it; and you, sustain
 your spirit
 Still at its height and poise of forti-
 tude
 Firmly to front this infirm face of
 things
 That changes on us gazing, and each
 hour
 Shifts as the wind that shapes it; fear
 nor hope,
 Bethink yourself, shall make or unmake
 fate,
 Nor faith unbuild or build it, but that
 end
 Will be at last that will be. So, keep
 heart;
 Choose you two messengers for trust
 and speed
 While I go form again these lines of
 ours
 That break and loosen in the enemy's
 sight,
 If time shall let re-shape their ranks,
 and mend
 The breach of their defection; in short
 space
 Shall we have answer back whom I
 must meet,
 And then my sword shall take this
 day's chance up,
 And ease us of its trouble. Nay, make
 haste:
 Too long I stand yet here; send off at
 once
 Our message, and bid speed their word
 again
 Before our battle melt out of our hands,
 And we be ta'en with no man at our
 back.

SCENE II.—THE CAMP OF THE LORDS.

MORTON, LINDSAY, DU CROC, KIRKALDY of GRANGE, and others.

Morton. Will she not let him fight?

Kirkaldy. With no mean man,
 Or lesser than himself: he shall not
 mate

With me nor Tullibardine; we must
 find

One equal to make proffer of his hand,
 And by these messengers again
 returned,

That brought her first word and took
 back our own,

Himself now bids you forth by name to
 take

This justice on your sword.

Morton. And by my hand,

I am as glad as of his present death
 That I should be the man of all chosen
 out

To lay his death upon him. Let hire
 know

I am armed by this for answer.

Lindsay. Nay, my lord:

Who fights with Bothwell on this
 general plea

For all the land's sake, should not only
 bear

The right upon his sword of this large
 cause,

But stand in the eye of all the land so
 far

From all men's charge or any man's
 conceit

That might repute him touched or
 mixed at all

With Bothwell's works, or once but on
 his part

Suspected in time past or glanced upon
 Of enemies' eyes as parcel of his act,

That no sharp tongue on earth might
 find the mean

To tax his victory with unrighteous-
 ness

If he should conquer,—as, were yours
 the sword,

I doubt not it should surely,—nor dis-
 pute

The justice and pure truth that on our
 side

<p>Took up this challenge. You, they know, were one Of that dead man once wronged, and sworn, they say, To turn his treacheries on his head alive, And with his own lie pierce him as a sword: He never did me wrong, nor gave men cause To deem his death a thing that I should seek As just and natural part of my desire; So shall none hold it questionable or strange If I should stand against his slayer in arms As to do battle on the dead man's part That was toward me no traitor. <i>Morton.</i> Well, my lord, Take you then this upon you: to your hand I shall not grudge to yield that honor up. Which none more noble in the world might wield, Nor heart more true deserve; in sign whereof Here from mine own side I ungird the sword Which was my grandsire's, whose two- handed stroke Did suchlike service as shall you to-day To Scotland, in his hand that belled the cat, When other slaves that clung about the throne Made the land foul as this doth; to which end I gird you with it, that its edge again May lop as high a dangerous head away, And shear a weed as poisonous. This it was That drove to death even with its lift and flash The crew of Cochrane, as in scorn to smite Their necks that craved the halter, and were bowed Before the light and wind but of its stroke Down to the dust and death; and this again</p>	<p>Struck with one blow to hell by Fala brook Spens of Kilspindie, who being over- blown With favor and light love of the fourth James Gave with his life all these to Douglas up At the first change of sword-play; from such hand By heritage I have it, as from mine You now, my lord, by gift; and I well think That in those great dead hands of Bell- the-Cat It did no worthier work than ere we sleep This land in yours shall see it. <i>Lindsay.</i> Sir, with glad heart I take the burden to me thankfully That this great gift lays on: as with my hands I strip this armor off, and take from yours To gird my body left else weaponless This the most prosperous and most noble steel That ever did truth right, so from my soul God witness me that I put off all thought Save of his justice to be served and shown, And keep no memory more to enforce my hand That he for whose dead sake I am girt to fight With one that slew him was of my kindred blood. Nor this mine own foe that I seek to slay, But only that I stand here single-souled For this land's sake and all its noble brood, To do their judgment on his murderous head Who is their general traitor; and I pray, Here on my knees before these war- like lines, [<i>Kneeling.</i> That God on whom I call will equally This day preserve and punish in men's sight</p>
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The just and unjust that he looks upon,
With blameless hand dividing their just
doom

To one and other. Yea, as thou art
Lord,

With eye to read between our hearts,
and hand

To part between us punishment and
grace,

Hear, God, and judge; and as thy sen-
tence is,

So shall man's tongue speak ever of
this day

And of his cause that conquers.

Morton. Laird of Grange,

While these that twice brought mes-
sage from the queen

Bear now this last news back of what
they hear,

Lest, when the traitor knows whom he
shall meet,

His foul heart fail him, and his false
foot flee

By what way forth is left him toward
Dunbar,

Take you two hundred horse, and with
good speed

Cross to the right beyond this hollow
ground,

And cut him off: so, though he fain
would fly

And she stand fast or follow, yet we
hold

As in one toil the lioness and the wolf
That clomb by night into the lion's bed,
Who stand now staked about with nets,
and, ringed

With pikes and hounds of hunters,
glare at bay

With eyes and teeth that shine against
us yet;

But the fierce feet are trammelled in
our toils,

Nor shall the tongues lap life again of
man.

Du Croc. Ay, lion-like, my lord, she
bears herself,

As who should shake all spears or
shafts away

Like leaves that fell upon her, and all
fears

As grains of dust brushed off; but he
too makes

Such gallant show at need of such good
heart

As in this utter peril where he stands
Might win, for one that had no unjust

cause,
Pity and praise of enemies, and for him

At least such mingled and discolored
fame

As falls not on a coward; nor can men
Report him in his end and sore extreme

But as a soldier tried of hand and
brain,

Skilful and swift, with heart to match
his eye

And wit to serve them; could these yet
avail

To ransom him by spirit of soldiership
And craft with courage tempered as

with fire
To wield with fiery cunning the wide

war,
He should not fall but mightily, nor

cease
But with a strife as earthquake.

Morton. Well, my lord,

With no such strife we think to win
him. — Go,

And if they send again to treat with us,
Speak you with her, and bring us once

more word.

SCENE III. — THE QUEEN'S CAMP.

The QUEEN and BOTHWELL.

Queen. Are we quite lost?

Bothwell. Ay, if I fight not; but
I will not die and fight not.

Queen. What, no help?

Is there not left a score of manlike men
To stand and strike round us that in

their ring
May fight enclosed, and fall where none

shall fly?
Are all our strengths slid from us? not

one troop
That has not piecemeal dropped with

shame away?
Not some twelve friends to back us yet,

and die
As never men died nobler?

Bothwell. No, not three:

My levies there of Lothian and the
Merse

<p>Are slipped away like water; of your men Not yet four hundred lie along the heights, Nor half will stay of these a half-hour hence. Look too where yonder rides about the hill The Laird of Grange, between us and Dunbar, As to make onset with two hundred horse Thence where the way is smooth, while those in front Charge up the hill right on our unfenced camp, And their trap's teeth shut on us. This remains Of all our chance, this one way to make end, That, while they yet refuse me not a man To bear the day's weight on his sword and mine, I go to meet whom they soever choose, With no more question made; and this I will, If yet they grant me but their meanest man For opposite as equal. <i>Queen.</i> Have they hearts, That have you for their fiery star of fight To see and not to follow? That I could But give mine own among all these away, And with the parcels of it portioned out Divide myself into a hundred hearts Of manlier-spirited blood, to raise us up For these a tribe of soldiers! Speak to them, And they will hear, and hunger to go on Full of your words to death; yea, all as I Will thirst to die around you. O my God! What is their blood, that it can kindle not To be so called of such a chief to die,</p>	<p>To hear his words, and leap not? Hast thou made Such stuff of man's flesh as we take for man, And mixed not soul enough to serve the hound Who gives for love his life up? These go back, These that might die, they start aside from death, They have no joy to close with it, but fear,— These that I deemed, come what might worst on us, Should fall with face and heart one fire of joy To ride on death, and grapple him and die. Have I not heard of men once in the world? I see none only but mine only love, Who finds not one to follow. You shall fight, And, if we thrive not, shame them with your end As I with mine ensuing. That I might stand Your second, and my sword be page to yours, As on your death my death should wait at need, And halt not after! No, you shall not die. O miserable white hanging hands, that rest Baffled and bloodless! let your king- dom go, Let all things pass together: what of price Should ye keep back that could not fight for him Who falls for lack of seconds? Nay, the fault Comes all of me that fail him, I it is Bring down that high head to the earth with mine, That helmless head, for my sake; oh, for love's, Kiss me, and kill me! be not wroth, but strike; For if I live I shall but deal more death,</p>
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And where I would not shall the more
 destroy,
 Living and loving; yea, whom I would
 save,
 Him shall I slay the surelier: save
 then me,
 Lest I do this, and dying abhor myself,
 Save me and slay; let not my love
 again
 Kill more than me, that would have
 shed my blood
 To spare the blood I shed; make me
 now sure;
 Let me cease here.
Bothwell. Peace, and give heed: you
 see
 Whither the day has brought us, and
 what hope
 Holds anywhere of rescue; this one
 lot
 Lies in my hand by fortune to be
 drawn,—
 That yet by God's and by our enemies'
 grace
 I may fight singly though my whole
 world fail,
 And end no less than soldier. Now,
 my queen,
 As you are highest of women's hearts
 that live,
 And nobler than your station stands
 your soul,—
 As you had never fear, and in this
 past
 As ever you have loved me,—by such
 sign
 And in such name I charge you, put
 me not
 In this great need to shame: let me go
 forth
 As should yourself being king, had you
 the cause
 That our linked loves put on me. By
 that heart
 That is so fain within you to be man's,
 Make me not meaner than the man I
 am,
 Nor worthless of the name; think with
 what soul
 Would you stand up to battle in my
 stead,
 And wrong me not to pluck that prize
 away,
 Which, were you I, you would not yield
 to me,
 Nor I would ask of you; desire not
 this,
 To have me for your sake so vile a
 thing,
 When I should rise up worthiest, that
 no man
 Could bear such name, and live; bid me
 not be—
 Because you love me that are first on
 earth
 And crowned of queens most royal—
 such a slave
 As might not seek and be not spit
 upon
 The foulest favor that is given for
 gold
 From lips more vile than all things else
 but I
 Who durst not fight for you: make me
 not this;
 Let me die rather such a man as might,
 Having your love, had fortune loved
 him too,
 Have lived beside you kinglike, and
 not left
 Less memory than a king's.
Queen. Oh, you shall go!
 Look how I hold you not: yes, you
 shall fight,
 And I sit strengthless here.— You shall
 not yet:
 If I did know that God were with my
 heart,
 Then should you go indeed; could I
 sit sure
 My prayer had power upon him, and
 my cause
 Had made him mine to fight for me,
 and take
 My charge and this field's issue in his
 hand,
 I would not doubt to send you. Nay,
 myself
 Will speak to those my soldiers; they
 will fight;
 They shall not choose for shame who
 hear me speak,
 But fear to fight not. Oh, for all this
 yet,
 If they were men about me, they would
 sweep

<p>Those traitors from the hillside as a wind, And make me way to live. What! if I speak, If I kneel to them, each man by his name, Bid him fight for me though I be not king, His king to lead him, — as, had I been born My father's son, they should have fought, and found A king to fight for and a sword to lead Worth many a good sword's following, — nay, but these That will not fight for you whose sword they see Worth all their swords to follow, for no king's Would they take heart to strike. Love, you shall go: Send out a flag to bid one come and say Who dares of all fight with you. Why, methought This march-folk loved you and your sword's bright name That burned along their borders: is there left No such fierce love of theirs and faith at need To do us soldier's service? <i>Bothwell.</i> Look, and see: Their ranks unknit themselves, and slide more fast From the bare slopes away whereon they stand Than the last leaves or the last snows that fade From off the fields or branches: and this thaw Speaks not our spring, but winter. Let them pass; If I may stand but in mine enemy's face, One foot of ours shall slip not, and one hand Be reddened on our side. I will go send Word with your flag of truce by Ormis- ton, To bid their spokesman to us. [<i>Exit.</i> <i>Queen.</i> What am I worth,</p>	<p>That can nor fight nor pray? my heart is shut As a sealed spring of fire, and in mine ears This air that holds no thunder, but fair day, Sounds louder than a stricken brazen bell That rings in a great wind, or the blown sea That roars by night for shipwreck. <i>Re-enter BOTHWELL with KIRKALDY.</i> <i>Bothwell.</i> Here is he That brings our lords' will with him, and shall show But in your private ear; I while you please Will wait apart upon you. [<i>Retires.</i> <i>Queen.</i> Is it you, Is it my friend of France, my knight and friend, Comes on such errand in mine extreme need To me that honored him? Sir, time has been That, had one asked me what man most on earth I would for trust have sought the ser- vice of In such sore straits as this, I had found no name But yours to leap the first upon my lips, On whom I have seen my father, the French king, Point with his hand, saying, <i>Yonder goes there one Of the most valiant men in all our age,</i> And ever would he choose you on his side In all his pastimes for your manhood's sake And might in jousts of men and gal- lant games, And when they shot for mastery at the butts Would make you shoot two arrows still for one, And took delight beyond all shots of theirs To see how far forth would your great shaft fly,</p>
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<p>Sped for his pleasure; and my heart grew great For my land's sake whereof your strength was made, That bore such men for honor; and the best Who served my father Henry in his wars Looked reverently upon you horsed at head Of your brave hundred men that rode with you, And never the great constable of France Would speak to you uncovered as to one Less than his own place worthy; and your hand Here on these marches hath not lost its praise For many as fair a stroke as overthrew Between our ranks and the English in mid-field Lord Rivers' brother, fighting for this land That with a tongue as true and service- able You strove in speech to save the free- dom of, That by no policy it should be subdued To a French province. So for faith and love, For valor, wisdom, and for gentleness, I wist no Scot had worthier name alive: Shall I say now I have no deadlier foe? [KIRKALDY kneels. I do not bid you kneel: speak, and stand up; I have no help or comfort of men's knees, Nor pleasure of false worship; well I know, For all knees bowed, how hearts and hands are bent Of mine own men against me. Speak, I pray: I am as their servant bound who speak in you And open-eared to hear them. <i>Alcibiades.</i> From the lords, Madam, no word I have to bring but one, That from this field they will not part alive</p>	<p>Without the man in bonds they came to seek; Him will they take, or die: but on your part They have no thought that is not set to serve And do you honor, would but you for- sake The murderer of your husband, who to you Can be no husband, being but lately wed To the earl of Huntley's sister, and your friend By your own mean and favor. <i>Queen (to BOTHWELL).</i> Hold, my lord: Let not your man give fire. — Sir, guard yourself: See you not where one stands to shoot at you? — You will not do me this dishonor, see- ing I have given my faith he should come safely through, And go back safe? <i>Bothwell.</i> Why let him, then, and say That I will yet maintain my proffered cause To fight with any that shall challenge me Of the king's murder. <i>Kirkaldy.</i> Sir, the first was I To let you wit myself would fight with you Upon that quarrel; and the first re- fused, As being nor earl nor lord nor mate of yours, But a poor baron only; the like word You sent to Tullibardine; in whose place Stands now my lord of Lindsay, if your heart Yet fail you not to meet him, as it seems Now to grow cold in shadow of his sword That hangs against you in the air ad- vanced, Darkening your sight and spirit. <i>Bothwell (to the QUEEN).</i> Shall this be said,</p>
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This shame go forth forever through
 the world
 Of one that held you by the wedded
 hand
 And loosed it even for fear? Now let
 me go:
 There is no way now but the best, and
 this
 You shall no more forbid me: one last
 time
 I do implore you, make not of your
 love
 The branding-iron that should sign me
 slave
 In sight of all men always, and on you
 Stamp the vile name of wife to no true
 man,
 But harlot of a coward: who shall
 spare
 To throw that name and shame on
 such a love
 As came to such an end as ours shall
 come
 If here its sun set bloodless, but more
 red
 With shame than blood could brand it?
Queen. I have thought,
 And set my heart against all chance to
 come
 Of blame or blood that ever shall mark
 me;
 Alone I take it on mine only hand,
 And will not yield this one thing up to
 yours,
 Who have yielded all things else, and
 this I would,
 But that I may not with my soul
 alive.—
 Sir, if my lords within whose hand I
 am
 Shall stand content to let my husband
 go,
 Into their ward will I give up myself
 On what good terms shall please them
 to call good,
 So he may pass forth freely with such
 friends
 Of these that have not hands enough
 to fight
 As shall cleave to him; I pray you
 make good speed,
 And let this day have end.
Kirkaldy. Madam, I go. [Exit.

Queen. Do not speak yet: a word
 should burst my heart;
 It is a hollow crystal full of tears
 That even a breath might break, and
 they be spilt
 And life run out with them; no dia-
 mond now,
 But weaker than of wax. Life of that
 heart,
 There is but one thing hath no reme-
 dy,—
 Death. All ill else have end or hope
 of end,
 And time to work their worst before
 time change:
 This death hath none; there is all hope
 shut fast,
 All chance bound up forever: change
 nor time
 Can help nor comfort this. You shall
 not die;
 I can hold fast no sense of thought but
 this,—
 You shall not.
Bothwell. Well, being sundered, we
 may live,
 And living meet; and here to hold the
 field
 Were but a deadly victory, and my hand
 The mockery of a conqueror's; we
 should pass
 No less their prisoners from the field
 thus won
 Than from these lists defeated. You
 do well;
 They dare not urge or strain the power
 they have
 To bring me prisoner where my witness
 borne
 Might show them parcel of the deed
 and guilt
 For which they rise up to lay hold on
 me
 As upright men of doom, and with pure
 hands
 To hale me to their judgment. I will
 go,
 Till good time bring me back; and you
 that stay,
 Keep faith with me.
Queen. Oh, how does one break faith?
 What are they that are faithless? by
 my love,

I cannot tell or think how I should lie,
Should live and lie to you that are my
faith,
My soul, my spirit, my very and only
God,

My truth and trust that makes me true
of heart,

My life that feeds and light that lightens
me,

My breath and blood of living. Doth
God think

How I shall be without you? what
strange breath

Shall my days draw, what strange blood
feed my life,

When this life that is love is gone from
them

And this light lost? Where shall my
true life go,

And by what far ways follow to find
love,

Fly where love will? Where will you
turn from me?

Bothwell. Hence will I to Dunbar,
and thence again

There is no way but northward and to
ship

From the north islands; thence be-
times abroad

By land or sea to lurk, and find my life
Till the wheel turn.

Queen. Ah God! that we were set
Far out at sea alone by storm and
night

To drive together on one end, and
know

If life or death would give us good or
ill

And night or day receive, and heaven
or earth

Forget us or remember!— He comes
back:

Here is the end.

Bothwell. But till time change his
tune;

No more nor further. We shall find
our day.

Queen. Have we not found? I know
not what we shall,

But what hath been and is, and whence
they are,

God knows if now I know not. He is
here.

Re-enter KIRKALDY.

Kirkaldy. Madam, the lords return
by me this word:

With them must you go back to Edin-
burgh,

And there be well entreated as of
friends;

And for the duke, they are with one
mind content

He should part hence for safe and
present flight;

But here may tarry not, or pass not
free.

This is the last word from them by my
mouth.

Queen. Ay is it, sir,— the last word
I shall hear,—

Last in mine ear forever: no com-
mand

Nor threat of man shall I give ear to
more,

That have heard this.— Will you not
go, my lord?

Is it not I would hold you.
Bothwell. Then, farewell,

And keep your word to me. What, no
breath more?

Keep then this kiss too with the word
you gave,

And with them both my heart and its
good hope

To find time yet for you and me. Fare-
well. [*Exit.*

Queen. O God! God! God!
Cover my face for me:

I cannot heave my hand up to my
head;

Mine arms are broken.
Is he got to horse?

I do not think one can die more than
this.

I did not say farewell.
Kirkaldy. My lord is gone.

Queen. Whom spake I to? I have
no woman here.

All these men's eyes have seen my
naked face

Wrung without tears for anguish, and
no hand

Hide my blind eyes if haply they might
weep

Great drops of blood and fiery.— Laird
of Grange,

I yield myself upon such terms to you
As in these lords' name you rehearsed
to me:

Have here my hand for sign.

Kirkaldy. Upon this hand
I lay the loyal witness of my lips
For duteous heart and service, and
crave leave

That I may lead your highness through
these ranks,

Where at the hill's foot we may find
your friends

Who shall come forth to meet you as
their queen

With all fair reverence.

Queen. Lead me to my lords:

For one so poor a servant as I am,
Here are too many masters. I could
pray,
But that they lack my service and should
chafe

If I dwell long upon my prayer, and let
My duty sleep or slacken toward them;
else

I could pray God to shut up from these
lands

His hand and eye of favor, that no dew
Might breed herefrom and no bloom
break again

Nor grass be glad forever; rain nor sun
Comfort their cankered face and harden-
ing heart,

Nor hand that tilled or foot that trod of
man

Pass and not curse them. Let me look
but once

Upon this hill whereon till this ninth
hour

Mine enemies' hands have crucified my
heart.

The sun burns yet, and the stream runs;
nor eye

Nor ear have these nor pity. Come, I
talk,

Who had no mind; God will not heed
me: come. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. — THE CAMP OF THE
LORDS.

MORTON, HUME, LINDSAY, *etc.*

Morton. What, is the Frenchman
gone?

Lindsay. With heavy cheer,
By this to set sad foot in Edinburgh.

Morton. There should we be by night
fall; and you see

How the day reddens downward, and
this hill

Hath all its west side fiery; he hath
done

The queen and us small service, to put
off

Her hour of yielding. Look! the last
spears left

Begin to move in sunder; there he
flies,

The traitor, with his heartless handful
backed

That yet for fear cling to him; and on
this side

Grange leads her down the hill between
our horse,

Who comes not like one captive.

Enter the QUEEN and KIRKALDY.

Queen. Tell me, sirs,
Are they my doomsmen whom I come
to find,

And those your headsmen who stand
sworded there

And visored soldier-like, that cry on
me

To burn and slay me? Let me have
quick doom,

And be beyond their crying.

Morton. Madam, I think
You cannot fear of us a deadly doom,
Nor shall you find. — Silence those
throats, I say!

Queen. I have not said I feared; nor
shall there come

For you that lying breath upon my lips.
What will ye do with what of me ye
have

If not what these tongues cry for?

Morton. Some man ride, —
You, Laird of Grange, with two or
three at back, —

And with the flatlong stroke of your
good swords

Smite their mouths dumb. — Madam,
take you no heed:

They shall not hurt you.

Queen. Sir, no heed have I;
I think these common haters shall not
hurt

Indeed, nor smite me but with tongues ;
 'tis you,
 My good lords only, from whose noble
 hands
 I look to take my death, who would not
 lose
 Nor lack this royal office. For my
 sake
 Do them no hurt, I pray, who are but
 your mouths
 As you their hands ; I see no choice of
 you,
 Or them the lesser traitors.
Hume. I will go :
 Ride you that way, sir, by their ranks
 who shout,
 As I this side ; for every way men hear
 How the field rings that all the hills
 roar back
 With noise of names and cries to burn
 the whore
 And murderess of her husband : spare
 no strokes
 To shame or smite them silent.
Queen. You, my friends,
 Good servants that have care of my
 good name,
 And loyal lovers—of your love and
 grace,
 May it please you show me whither I
 must go
 To find what face of death ? or if yet
 none,
 And yet ye have not the hardy hearts
 to slay,
 To uncrown and slay me, I require you
 then
 Deliver me into my kinsmen's hands
 Of the house of Hamilton, in whose
 good ward
 I am content to abide men's evil will
 With honorable surety ; which refused,
 Of life nor honor shall I hold me sure
 For all your vows and voices, but
 esteem
 My life to be as all your honors, dead.
Morton. Madam, with mocks you
 cannot make us mad,
 To bring you to their trustless hands
 whose ward
 Should be to you but dangerous, and
 to us,
 And all this kingdom's hope in heritage,

And all men's good, most mortal. You
 must go
 With us to Edinburgh, and being made
 safe
 Abide the judgment there that shall not
 fall
 By fierce election of men's clamorous
 mouths
 Whose rage would damn you to the
 fire-clad death,
 But by their sentence who shall do no
 wrong,
 If justice may with honor make them
 sure,
 And faith defend from error.
Queen. Ay, my lord ?
 I shall be doomed, then, ere I die, and
 stand
 Before their face for judgment who
 should kneel
 To take my sentence as a scourge, and
 bear
 What brand my tongue set on them ?
 Nay, ye are mad.
 Kings have been slain with violence
 and red craft,
 Or fallen by secret or by popular hands ;
 But what man heard yet ever of a king
 Set to the bar of his own men, to plead
 For life with rebels' reasons, and wage
 words
 With whoso dare of all these baser
 born
 Rise up to judge him ? Surely I shall
 die,—
 Be rent perchance in pieces of men's
 fangs,
 But of their mouths not sentenced. In
 fair field
 That only steel that bids a king's neck
 stoop
 Is the good sword that in a warlike
 hand
 Makes his head bow, and cuts not off
 his crown
 But with the stroke of battle : who hath
 seen
 By doom of man a king's head king-
 domless
 Bow down to the axe and block ? so
 base an edge
 Can bite not on such necks. Let me
 bleed here,

By their swift hands who ravin for my blood;
 Or be assured how if ye let me live
 I live to see you die for me as dogs;
 Ye shall be hanged on crosses, nailed on rows,
 For birds to rend alive; ye shall have doom,
 A dog's doom and a traitor's, and the cord
 Strangle the sentence in your laboring lips,
 And break the plea that heaves your throat, and leaves
 Your tongue thrust forth to blacken: ye shall wage
 Words and try causes with the worms and flies
 Till they leave bare your bones to sun and wind
 As shame shall leave your titles. Was it you [To LINDSAY.
 That were to fight before me with my lord?
 Give me your hand, sir: by this hand of yours
 I swear for this thing yet to have your head,
 And so thereof assure you.
Morton. Bid the camp
 Strike, and set forth behind us. Sirs, to horse;
 And, madam, be not yet so great of speech
 As utterly to outwear your spirit of strength
 Wit's pain and passion that can bear no fruit
 But wind and wrath and barren bitterness.
 Vex not yourself more than your foes would vex,
 Of whom we would be none that ride with you
 From them to guard you that would lay red hands
 On you yet faint and weak from this fierce day.
Queen. My body and head wax faint, but not my heart;
 I have yet there fire enough for all of you,

To burn your strengths up that my feebler limbs
 Can make my heart not yield to nor bow down,
 Nor fear put out its fires. Come, worthy lords,
 And lead me to my loving town again,
 That bears your heads not yet above its gates
 Where I shall see them feasting if I live. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.—EDINBURGH: A ROOM IN THE PROVOST'S HOUSE.

Enter MAITLAND and PROVOST.

Maitland. Are the gates fast?

Provost. Ay; but the street yet seethes

With ebb and flow of fighting faces thronged,
 And crush of onset following on her heel

Where she came in, and whence at her own call

You drove them off her; and above the ranks

Flaps the flag borne before her as she came,

Wrought with the dead king's likeness; and their cry

Is yet to burn or drown her. It were but

A manlike mercy now for men to show,
 That she should have some woman's hand of hers

To tend her fainting who should be nigh dead

With fear and lack of food and weariness.

Maitland. Nay, if she die not till she die for fear,

She must outlive man's memory: twice or thrice

As she rode hither with that sable flag
 Blown overhead whereon the dead man lay

Painted, and by him beneath a garden tree

His young child kneeling, with soft hands held up,

And the word underwritten of his prayer,—

Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord,—
she seemed

At point to swoon, being sick with two
days' fast,

And with faint fingers clung upon the
rein,

And gaped as one athirst with foodless
lips

And fair head fainting; but for very
scorn

Was straightway quickened and uplift
of heart,

And smote us with her eyes again, and
spoke

No weaker word but of her constant
mind

To hang and crucify, when time should
be,

These now her lords and keepers; so
at last

Beneath these walls she came in with
the night,

So pressed about with foes that man by
man

We could but bring her at a foot's pace
through

Past Kirk of Field between the roaring
streets,

Faint with no fear, but hunger and
great rage,

With all men's wrath as thunder at her
heel,

And all her fair face foul with dust and
tears,

But as one fire of eye and cheek that
shone

With heat of fiery heart and unslaked
will

That took no soil of fear.

Provost. What shall be done
When sentence shall pass on her?

Maitland. By my will,
She shall not die, nor lose her royal
name,

Wherein the council only shall bear
rule,

And take to its own hand the care to
wreak

On her false lord now fled our general
wrong,

Who being but overtaken of its sword
Shall be divorced at once from her and
life.

Provost. But this shall not content
the common will,

Nor theirs who bind and loose it with
their tongues

And cry now for her blood; the town
is loud

With women's voices keener than of men
To call for judgment on her and swift
death

Sharp as their anger.

Maitland. Ay, the time is mad
With noise of preachers and the femi-
nine spleen

That of mere rage and blind mobility
Barks in brute heat for blood; but on
these tongues

The state yet hangs not, nor the general
weal

Is swayed but by the violent breath of
these.

Here sits she safe.

Provost. I would I knew it; her
mood

Is as a wind that blows upon a fire,
And drives her to and fro: she will not
eat,

But rages here and there, and cries
again

On us for traitors, on her friends for
help,

On God for comfort of her cause and
crown

That of his foes and hers is violated,
And will not stint her clamors, nor
take rest,

For prayer nor bidding.

Maitland. I will speak with her
Ere I go hence; though she were mild
of mood,

The task were hard with Knox for
opposite

To bend the council to such policy
As might assure her but of life, which
thus

She whets the weapon in his tongue to
take.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.—ANOTHER ROOM IN THE
SAME.

The QUEEN and an ATTENDANT.

Queen. Wilt thou be true? but if
thou have not heart,

Yet do not, being too young to sell
 man's blood,
 Betray my letter to mine enemies' hands
 Where it should be a sword to smite
 me with;
 If thou lack heart, I say, being but a
 boy,
 Swear not and break thine oath: but if
 thou have,
 Thou shalt not ask, for this mine errand
 done,
 The thing I will not give thee. At
 Dunbar
 Bring but this letter to my husband's
 hand;
 Spare for no speed; if it were possible,
 I would it might be with him ere day
 dawn
 On me condemned of men. I have no
 hope,
 Thou seest, but in thee only: thou art
 young,
 And mean of place, but be thou good
 to me
 And thou shalt sit above thy masters
 born
 And nobles gray in honor. Wilt thou go?
 Have here mine only jewel, and my
 faith
 That I plight to thee, when my hand
 may choose,
 To give thee better gifts. Haste, and
 so thrive
 As I by thee shall. [*Exit Attendant.*
 Though thou play me false,
 Thou dost no more than God has done
 with me,
 And all men else before thee: yet I
 could not
 But write this worthless one word of
 my love,
 Though I should die for writing it in
 vain,
 And he should never read it.
Enter MAITLAND.
 Come you not
 To tell me of my commons and your
 friends,
 That by their will despite you I must
 die?
 It were no stranger now than all things
 are
 That fall as on me dreaming.

Maitland. Madam, no:
 I come to plead with you for your own
 life,
 Which wrath and violent mood would
 cast away.
Queen. What is my life to any man
 or me
 As ye have made it? If ye seek not
 that,
 Why have ye torn me from my hus-
 band's hand,
 With whom ye know that I would live
 and die
 With all content that may be in the
 world?
Maitland. For your own honor have
 we sundered you.
 You know not him, who late writ word
 — myself
 Can show this letter — to the Lady
 Jane,
 She was his wife and you his concubine,
 No more but sport and scandal in his
 sheets,
 And loved for use but as a paramour,
 And for his ends to rise and by your
 lips
 Be kissed into a kingdom; and each
 week
 Since they were first but as in show
 divorced
 And but of craft divided, on some days
 Have they held secret commerce to
 your shame
 As wedded man and wife.
Queen. There is one thing
 That I would ask of even such friends
 as you, —
 To turn me with my lord adrift at sea,
 And make us quit of all men.
Maitland. For yourself,
 You drive on no less danger here of
 wreck,
 Seeing for your life if England take no
 care
 France will nor strike nor speak; and
 had you not
 In your own kindly kingdom yet some
 friends
 Whose hearts are better toward you,
 these wot well
 You have none left you helpful in the
 world.

Yet what we may will I and all these
do

To serve you in this strait; so for this
night

Let not your peril, which can breed
not fear,

For that breed anger in you; and fare-
well. [*Exit.*]

Queen. None but such friends? O
yet my living lord,

O still my comfort, hadst thou none
but me

As I save thee have no man, we would
go

Hand fast in hand to dreadless death,
and see

With such clear eyes as once our mar-
riage-bed

Fire, or the sword's light lifted to make
end

Of that one life on both our lips that
laughed

To think he could not sunder them who
smote,

Nor change our hearts who chilled
them; we would kiss,

Laugh, and lie down, and sleep: but
here in bonds

I will not tamely like a dumb thing die
That gives its blood and speaks not.

If I find
No faith in all this people, yet my
curse

Shall through this casement cry in all
their ears

That are made hard against me. — Ho
there! you,

All that pass by, your queen am I that
call:

Have I no friend of all you to turn
back

The swords that point on this bare
breast, the hands

That grasp and hale me by the hair to
death,

By this discrowned rent hair that wore
too soon

The kingdom's weight of all this land
in gold?

Have I no friend? no friend?

Voice without. Ay, here was one;
Know you yet him? — Raise up the ban-
ner there,

That she may look upon her lord, and
take

Comfort.

A Woman. What! was not this that
kneels the child

Which hung once at that harlot's breast
now bare,

And should have drunk death from its
deadly milk?

Hide it for shame; bind up the wanton
hair,

Cover the poisonous bosom: here is
none

To kiss the print of that adulterer's
head

Which last lay on it.

Another Voice. Whither is he flown,
Whose amorous lips were bloody, and

left red

The shameless cheek they fed on as
with shame?

Where is your swordsman at your back
to guard

And make your sin strut kinglike?
where his hand

That made this dead man's child kneel
fatherless,

And plead with God against you for
his blood?

Where is your king-killer?

Queen. The day shall be
That I will make this town a fire, and
slake

The flame with blood of all you: there
shall stand

No mark of man, no stone of these its
walls,

To witness what my wrath made ruin
of

That turned it first to smoke, and then
put out

With all your blood its ashes.

Enter PROVOST.

How we are handled of our townfolk
there,

Being yet in ward of you? but by my
head,

If now by force it fall not, you as these
Shall buy this of me bloodily, and

first

Shall bleed of all whose lives will pay
not me.

Provost. Madam, as you desire to see that day,
Contain yourself: this flame whereon you blow
Will fasten else untimely on your hand,
And leave it harmless toward us. I beseech you,
Though but for hate of us and hope to hurt,
Eat, and take rest.
Queen. I will not: what are ye,
That I should care for hate of you to live
Who care not for the love's sake of my life?
If I shall die here in your hateful hands,
In God's I put my cause, as into them
I yield the spirit that dares all enemies yet
By force to take it from me. Die or live
I needs must at their bidding; but to sleep,
Eat, drink, weep, laugh, speak or keep silence, these
They shall not yet command me till I die. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII. — THE HIGH STREET.

A Crowd of CITIZENS.

First Citizen. Who says she shall not die?
Second Citizen. Even he that stands
First in this city, Morton: by his doom,
Death shall not pass upon her.
First Citizen. Will he say it?
Yet is this man not all the tongue or hand
That Scotland has to speak or smite with.
Third Citizen. Nay,
When he so spake against their honest voice
Who called for judgment, one arose that said—
I know not who, but one that spake for God—
That he who came between God's sword and her
Should as a stayer of justice by the sword
Be stricken of God's justice.

First Citizen. What said he?
Third Citizen. No word, but frowned; and in his eye and cheek
There sprang a fire, and sank again, as 'twere
For scorn that anger should have leave to speak,
Though silently; but Maitland writhed his lip,
And let his teeth grin doglike, and between
There shot some snarling word that mocked at God,
And at the servants of his wrath, who wait
To see his will done on her, and men's hands
Made ministers to set it forth so broad
That none might pass and read not.
Second Citizen. Why, by this
Part hangs of it already in men's sight:
I have word here from Dunbar, of one that was
An officer of Bothwell's, and alive
Laird of Blackadder, whom they seized at sea
Flying from death to deathward, and brought back
To be nigh rent in pieces of their hands
Who haled him through the streets to hang, and left
Not half a man unbroken or unbruised
To feel the grip o' the gallows.
First Citizen. They did well:
Shall we do worse, that have within our hand
The heart and head of all this evil, her
By whom all guilt looks guiltless till she die
A whore's death or a murderer's, burn or drown,
And leave more free the common doom of man
To pass on lesser sins? While she doth live,
How should it speak for shame to bid men die
For what sin done soever, who might say
She lives and laughs yet in God's face and eye,
And finds on earth no judgment as do these

Whose bloodiest hands are whiter than
her soul?
Let her die first.

Third Citizen. Ay shall she, if God
put
Upon those lips that never lacked it yet
His fire to burn men's hearts, and make
that tongue
His sword that hath been ever. Yes-
ternight
Came Knox to Edinburgh, and here
should speak
By this among us of the doom to fall
On us or her, that if it bruise her not
Must glance aside against us.

Second Citizen. He is here.
Draw nigh, but make no noise.

Enter JOHN KNOX.
First Citizen. Nay, all the press
Heaves round about him silent.

Others. Sirs, give place;
Make way for Master Knox to stand
and speak
Here in your midst; here is it higher;
give way.
Make room to hear him. Peace there,
and stand still.

John Knox. What word is this that
ye require of man?
Ye that would hear me, what speech
heard of mine
Should lift your hearts up if they sit
not high,—
If they lack life, should quicken? for
this day
Ye know not less than I know that the
Lord
Hath given his enemy to you for a
prey,
His judgment for a fire: what need
have ye,
Or he what need of other tongues to
speak
Than this which burns all ears that
hear on earth
The blast of this day's justice blown
in heaven—
As where is he that hears not? In your
hand
Lies now the doom of God to deal, and
she
Before your face to abide it, in whose
mouth

His name was as a hissing; and had I
The tongues in mine of angels, and
their might,
What other word or mightier should I
seek
Than this to move you? or, should ye
wax cold,
What fuel should I find out to kindle
you?
If God ye hear not, how shall ye hear
me?
Or if your eyes be sealed to know not
her,
If she be fit to live or no, can I
With words unseal them? None so
young of you
But hath long life enough to understand
And reason to record what he hath seen
Of hers and of God's dealings mutually
Since she came in. Then was her
spirit made soft,
Her words as oil, and with her amorous
face
She caught men's eyes to turn them
where she would,
And with the strong sound of her name
of queen
Made their necks bend; that even of
God's own men
There were that bade refuse her not
her will,
Deny not her, fair woman and great
queen,
Her natural freedom born, to give God
praise
What way she would, and pray what
prayers; though these
Be as they were, to God abominable
And venomous to men's souls. So
came there back
The cursed thing cast forth of us,
and so
Out of her fair face and imperious eyes
Lightened the light whereby men walk
in hell.
And I that sole stood out, and bade not
let
The lightning of this curse come down
on us
And fly with feet as fire on all winds
blown
To burn men's eyes out that beheld
God's face,

<p>That being long blind but now gat sight, and saw, And praised him seeing; I that then spake and said, Ten thousand men here landed of our foes Were not so fearful to me on her side As one mass said in Scotland; that withstood The man to his face I loved, her father's son, Then mastered by the pity of her, and made Through that good mind not good,— who then but I Was taxed of wrongful will, and for hard heart Miscalled of men? And now, sirs, if her prayer Were just and reasonable, and unjust I That bade shut ears against it; if the mass Hath brought forth innocent fruit, and in this land Wherein she came to establish it again Hath established peace with honor; if in her It hath been found no seed of shame, and she That loved and served it seem now in men's sight No hateful thing nor fearful; if she stand Such a queen proven as should prove honorable The rule of women, and in her that thing Be shown forth good that was called evil of me, Blest and not curst,—then have I sinned, and they That would have crossed me would have crossed not God: Whereof now judge ye. Hath she brought with her Peace, or a sword? and since her in- coming Hath the land sat in quiet, and the men Seen rest but for one year? or came not in Behind her feet, right at her back, and shone</p>	<p>Above her crowned head as a fierier crown, Death, and about her as a raiment wrapt Ruin? and where her foot was ever turned Or her right hand was pointed, hath there fallen No fire, no cry burst forth of war, no sound As of a blast blown of an host of men For summons of destruction? Hath God shown For sign she had found grace in his sight, and we For her sake favor, while she hath reigned on us, One hour of good, one week of rest, one day? Or hath he sent not for an opposite sign Dissensions, wars, rumors of wars, and change, Flight and return of men, terror with power, Triumph with trembling? Hath one foot stood fast, One head not bowed, one face not veiled itself, One hand not hidden? Was this once or twice That ye beheld, this brief while of her reign, Strong men one day make mouths at God, the next Lie where his foes lie fallen? or since she came Have ye seen raised up of them and cast down But one or two that served her? Which of these, Which of them all that looked on her and loved, And men spake well of them, and pride and hope Were as their servants,—which of all them now Shall men speak well of? How fared he the first Hailed of his own friends and elect her lord, Who gave her kinsmen heart and god- less hope</p>
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<p>By him to reign in her and wield this land, Yet once with me took counsel and sought grace, And suddenly God left him, and he stood Brain-smitten, with no bride-bed now nor throne To conquer, but go senseless to his grave, The broken-witted Hamilton,— what end, Think ye, had this man? Or what hope and hap The next whose name met on men's lips with hers, And ballads mourned him in his love's sight slain,— Gordon, that in the dawn of her dark day Rose northward as a young star fiery red, Flashed in her face, and fell, for her own breath Quenched him? What good thing gat they for her sake, These that desired her, yet were mighty lords, Great in account of great men? So they twain Perished; and on men meaner far than these When this queen looked, how fared they? folk that came With wiles and songs and sins from oversea, With harping hands and dancing feet, and made Music and change of phrases in her ear,— White rose out of the south, star out of France, Light of men's eyes and love! yea, verily, Red rose out of the pit, star out of hell, Fire of men's eyes and burning! for the first Was caught as in a chamber snare, and fell Smiling, and died with <i>Farewell, the most fair And the most cruel princess in the world.</i>—</p>	<p>With suchlike psalms go suchlike souls to God Naked,— and in his blood she washed her feet Who sat and saw men spill it; and this reward Had this man of his dancing. For the next, On him ye know what hand was last year laid,— David, the close tongue of the Pope, the hand That held the key of subtle and secret craft As of his viol, and tuned all strings of state With cunning finger; not the foot o' the king Before God's ark when Michal mocked at him Danced higher than this man's heart for confidence To bring from Babylon that ark again Which he that touches, he shall surely die,— But not the death of Uzzah; for thereon God's glory rests not, but the shadow of death, And dead men's bones within it: yet his trust Was to lift up again and to relume The tabernacle of Moloch, and the star Of Remphan, figures which our fathers made, That such as he might go before, and play On timbrels and on psalteries and on harps, On cornets and on cymbals; and the Lord Brake him; and she being wroth at God took thought How they that saw might call his place of death The breach of David, and her heart waxed hot Till she should make a breach upon his foes As God on him, and with a dire new name And a new memory quite put out that name</p>
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<p>And memory of his slaying; yea, all this land, That hath seen evil of many men before And sins of many years, hath seen till now No sin as hers, nor on her forefathers Whose hands were red and their hearts hard hath seen The note of such an evil as in her heart Became a fire conceiving, and brought forth The deed that in her hand was as a sword New tempered in that fire. For no such deed Was this as all theirs who play false or slay, Take gifts for whoredom, or lay snares to kill; But she gave gifts to hire her lover's knife That it might pierce her husband: even this land— This earth whereof our living limbs are made, This land renewed of God, this earth redeemed, With all souls born therein to worship him That call it mother—was the hire she gave To fee the adulterer's hand when it should rise Against her lord to slay him; yea, all of you, And each part of this kingdom, and each man That but draws breath within her range of reign, Were parcel of this hire, as counted coins To make the sum up of her goodly gift. And he that of their hands was bought and sold, Her wedded husband, that had bowed his head Before her worshipped idol,— think ye not That by her hand God gave him all his wage Who was a less thing in his eyes than she,</p>	<p>And viler than her service? for the fire Fell not from heaven that smote him, yet not less Was kindled of God's wrath than of man's hate, And in a woman's craft his will put forth To make her sin his judgment. But of these, The slain and slayer, the spoiler and the spoiled, That each have lain down by her wed- ded side, Which will ye say hath slept within her bed A sleep more cursed, and from more evil dreams Found a worse waking? he that with a blast Which rent the loud night as a cry from hell Was blown forth darkling from her sheets, or he That shared and soiled them till this day whereon God casts him out upon the track of Cain To flee forever with uncleansed red hands, And seek and find not where in the waste world To hide the wicked writing on his brow Till God rain death upon him? for his foot, Be sure, shall find no rest, his eye no sleep, His head no covert and his heart no hope, His soul no harbor and his face no light; But as a hound the wolf that bleeds to death God's wrath shall hunt him through the dark, and fear Shall go before him as a cloud by day, By night a fire, but comfort not his head By day with shadow, nor with shine by night Guide lest his foot be dashed against a stone, But in fair heaven before the morning's face</p>
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<p>Make his air thick with thunder, and put out All lamplike eyes of stars that look on him, Till he lie down blind in the dust, and die. Or if God haply give his lightnings charge They hurt him not, and bid his wind pass by And the stroke spare him of the bolted cloud, Then seeing himself cast out of all that live, But not of death accepted, everywhere An alien soul and shelterless from God, He shall go mad with hate of his own soul, Of God and man and life and death, and live A loathlier life and deadlier than the worm's That feeds on death, and when it rots from him Curse God and die. Such end have these that loved; And she that was beloved, what end shall she? What think ye yet would God have done with her, Who puts her in our hand to smite or spare That hath done all this wickedness? For these, What were they but as shadows in the sun Cast by her passing, or as thoughts that fled Across her mind of evil, types and signs Whereby to spell the secret of her soul Writ by her hand in blood? What power had they, What sense, what spirit, that was not given of her, Or what significance or shape of life Their act or purpose, formless else and void, Save as her will and present force of her Gave breath to them and likeness? None of these Hath done or suffered evil save for her,</p>	<p>Who was the spring of each man's deed or doom And root for each of death, and in his hand The sword to die by and the sword to slay. Shall this be left, then, naked in the world For him that will to stab our peace to death? What blood is this drips from the point, what sign, What scripture is enamelled on the blade? Lo, this fair steel forged only to divide This land from truth, and cut her soul in twain, To cleave the cords in sunder that hold fast Our hope to heaven and tie our trust to God,— Here by the hilt we hold it, and well know That if we break not, this now blunted edge, Being newly ground and sharpened of men's hands That watch if ours will yet loose hold of it, Shall pierce our own hearts through. Ay, be ye sure, If ye bid murder and adultery live, They live not stingless; not a Scot that breathes, No man of you nor woman, but bath part In each her several sin and punishment That ye take off from her. But what are these That with their oaths or arms would fence her round, And hide her from God's lightnings? Know they not — Or if they know not, will ye too be blind? — What end that Lord who hath bowed so many a head, So many and mighty, of those her former friends, Hath power to make of these men? Shall they stand, Because they have done God service while they would,</p>
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<p>And cease to serve him? or their good deeds past Who served not God as Job forsooth for naught Sustain their feet from falling? Strength nor craft, Nor praise nor fear nor faith nor love of men, Shall be for buckler to them, nor his name A helm of vantage for the Douglas' head If he make stiff against the yoke of God Too proud a neck, that for the curb cast off May feel the weight and edge that iron hath, To check high minds and chasten; nor his wit Nor subtle tongue shall be for Leth- ington But as a pointless and unfeathered shaft Shot heavenward without hurt, that falls again In the archer's eye to pierce it; and his lips That were so large of mockery when God spake, By present organ of his works and wrath And tongueless sound of justice audi- ble, Shall drink the poison of their words again, And their own mocks consume them; and the mouth That spat on Christ, now pleading for his foes, Be stricken dumb as dust. Then shall one say, Seeing these men also smitten, as ye now Seeing them that bled before to do her good, God is not mocked; and ye shall surely know What men were these and what man he that spake The things I speak now prophesying, and said That if he spare to shed her blood for shame,</p>	<p>For fear or pity of her great name or face, God shall require of you the innocent blood Shed for her fair face' sake, and from your hands Wring the price forth of her blood- guiltiness. Nay, for ye know it, nor have I need again To bring it in your mind if God ere now Have borne me witness: in that dreary day When men's hearts failed them for pure grief and fear To see the tyranny that was, and rule Of this queen's mother, where was no light left But of the fires wherein his servants died, I bade those lords that clave in heart to God, And were perplexed with trembling and with tears, Lift up their hearts, and fear not; and they heard What some now hear no more, the word I spake Who have been with them, as their own souls know, In their most extreme danger: Cowper Moor, Saint Johnston, and the Craggs of Edin- burgh, Are recent in my heart; yea, let these know, That dark and dolorous night wherein all they With shame and fear were driven forth of this town Is yet within my mind; and God for- bid That ever I forget it. What, I say, Was then my exhortation, and what word Of all God ever promised by my mouth Is fallen in vain, they live to testify Of whom not one that then was doomed to death Is perished in that danger; and their foes,</p>
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How many of these hath God before their eyes	The prophets, and made foul with blood and fire
Plague-stricken with destruction! lo the thanks	The same land's face that now her seed makes foul
They render him, now to betray his cause	With whoredoms and with witchcrafts; yet they say
Put in their hands to stablish; even that God's	Peace, where is no peace, while the adulterous blood
That kept them all the darkness through to see	Feeds yet with life and sin the murder- ous heart
Light, and the way that some now see no more,	That hath brought forth a wonder to the world
But are gone after light of the fen's fire,	And to all time a terror; and this blood The hands are clean that shed, and they that spare
And walk askant in slippery ways; but ye	In God's just sight spotted as foul as Cain's.
Know if God's hand have ever when I spake	If then this guilt shall cleave to you or no,
Writ liar upon me, or with adverse proof	And to your children's children, for her sake,
Turned my free speech to shame; for in my lips	Choose ye; for God needs no man that is loath
He put a word, and knowledge in my heart,	To serve him, and no word but his own work
When I was fast bound of his enemies' hands	To bind and loose their hearts who hear and see
An oarsman on their galleys, and be- held	Such things as speak what I lack words to say.
From off the sea whereon I sat in chains	<i>First Citizen.</i> She shall not live.
The walls wherein I knew that I there bound	<i>Second Citizen.</i> If by their mouths to- day
Should one day witness of him; and this pledge	She be set free from death, then by our hands
Hath God redeemed not? Nay then, in God's name,	She dies to-morrow.
If that false word fell unfulfilled of mine,	<i>Voices in the crowd.</i> Nay, to fire with her!
Heed ye not now nor hear me when I say	Fire for the murderess! cast her bones in the lake!
That for this woman's sake shall God cut off	Burn, burn and drown! She shall not live to-night.
The hand that spares her as the hand that shields,	SCENE VIII. — A ROOM IN THE PRO- VOST'S HOUSE.
And make their memory who take part with her	<i>The QUEEN, ATHOL, and MORTON.</i>
As theirs who stood for Baal against the Lord	<i>Queen.</i> I will not part from hence: here will I see
With Ahab's daughter; for her reign and end	What man dare do upon me.
Shall be like Athaliah's, as her birth Was from the womb of Jezebel, that slew	<i>Athol.</i> Hear you not How the cry thickens for your blood? This night Scarce has time left to save you.

Queen. I will die.

Morton. Madam, your will is no more
now the sword

That cuts all knots in sunder : you must
live,
And thank the force that would not
give you leave
To give your foes the blood they seek
to spill.

Here every hour's is as an arrow's
flight

Winged for your heart; if in these
clamorous walls

You see this darkness by the sun cast
out,

You will not see his light go down
alive.

Queen. What men are ye then, that
have made my life

Safe with your oaths, that walled it
round with words,

Fenced it with faith, and fortified it
with air

Made of your breaths and honors?
When ye swore,

I knew the lie's weight on your lips,
and took

My life into mine hand; I had no
thought

To live or ride among you but to death,
And whither ye have led me, to what

end,
Nor I nor God knows better than I
knew

Then when ye swore me safe; for then
as now

I knew your faith was lighter than my
life,

And my life's weight a straw's weight
in the wind

Of your blown vows. Pledge me your
faith to this,

That I shall die to-night if I go forth,
And if I stay live safe, and I will

go
In trust to live, being here assured to
die.

Morton. We swore to save you as
you swore again

To cast the traitor from you, and
divorce

Your hand forever from the blood on
his;

And with that hand you wrote to him
last night

Vows of your love and constant heart
till death

As his true wife to serve and cleave to
him.

The boy that should have borne your
letter lacked

Faith to be trusty to your faithless
trust,

And put it in our hand.

Queen. Why, so I thought:

I knew there was no soul between these
walls,

Of child or man, that had more faith
than ye

Who stand their noblest; nor shall one
soul breathe,

If here ye put not out my present life,
When I come back, that shall not burn

on earth
Ere hell take hold of it.

Morton. It is well seen,

Madam, that fear nor danger can pluck
forth

Your tongue that strikes men mad with
love or scorn,

Taunted or tempted; yet it shall not
wrest

Death from men's hands untimely:
what was sworn,

That you should live, shall stand; and
that it may,

To-night must you part hence; this
lord and I

Will bring you through to Holyrood
afoot,

And be your warders from the multi-
tude

As you pass forth between us; thence
to Leith,

And there shall you take water, and ere
dawn

Touch at Burntisland, whence some
twenty miles

Shall bear you to Lochleven and safe
guard

On the Fife border. He that has your
charge

Is one not trusted more than tried
of us,—

Sir William Douglas; in whose moth-
er's ward

<p>At Kinross there shall you abide what end God shall ordain. of troubles. At this need No kindlier guard or trustier could secure The life we pluck out of the popular mouth That roars agape to rend it. You must go. <i>Queen.</i> Must I not too go barefoot? Being your queen, Ye do me too much grace: I should be led In bonds between you, with my written sins Pinned to my forehead, and my naked shame Wrapt in a shameful sheet: so might I pass, If haply I might pass at all alive Forth of my people's justice, to salute With seemly show of penance her chaste eyes Whom ye have chosen for guard upon her queen And daughter of the king her para- mour, Whose son being called my brother I must call, Haply, to win her favor and her son's, And her good word with him as media- tress, My father's harlot mother. Verily, Ye are worthy guardians of fair fame, and friends Fit to have care of reputation, men That take good heed of honor; and the state That hath such counsellors to comfort it Need fear no shame nor stain of such reproach As makes it shrink when with her lords' good will, Advised of all tongues near her and approved, A queen may wed the worthiest born of men Her subjects, and a warrior take to wife One that being widowed of his hand and help Were such a thing as I am. From my lord</p>	<p>I held my kingdom: now my hand lacks his, What queen am I, and what slaves ye, that throng And threat my life with vassals, to make vile Its majesty foregone with abject fear Of my most abject? Yet though I lack might Save of a woman friendless and in bonds, My name and place yet lack not, nor the state And holy magic that God clothes withal The naked word of king or queen, and keeps In his own shadow, hallowed in his hand, Such heads unarmed as mine, that men may smite But no man can dis-hallow. In this faith, Not to your faith I yield myself for fear, But gladly to that God's who made of me What ye nor no man mightier shall unmake,— Your queen and mistress. Lead me through my streets, Whose stones are tongues now crying for my blood, To my dead fathers' palace, that hath oped On many kings and traitors. It may be I shall not see these walls and gates again That cast me out; but if alive or dead I come back ever to require my part And place among my fathers, on my tomb Or on my throne shall there stand graved for aye The living word of this day's work and that Which is to wreak me on it; and this town Whence I go naked in mine enemies' hands Shall be the flame to light men's eyes that read What was endured and what revenged of me.</p>
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ACT V. — THE QUEEN.

Time: From July 20, 1567, to May 16, 1568.

SCENE I. — HOLYROOD.

MORTON and MAITLAND.

Morton. I know not yet if we did well to lay

No public note of murder on the queen
In this our proclamation that sets forth
But the bare justice of our cause, and right

We had to move against her; while her act

Stands yet unproven, and seen but by surmise, —

Though all but they that will not seem to know

May know the form and very life of it, —

She hath a sword against us and a stay
In the English hearts and envious hands that wait

To strike at us, and take her name to gild

And edge the weapon of their evil will
Who only are our enemies, and stand

Sole friends of hers on earth; for France, we see,

Will be no screen nor buckler for her, though

Fire were now lit to burn her body, or steel

Ground sharp to shear her neck: from Catherine's mouth

Had Murray not assurance, and from him

Have we not word that France will stir no foot

To save or spill her blood? England alone

By her new-lighted envoy sends rebuke
Made soft and mixed with promise and with pledge

Of help and comfort to her against our part

Who by this messenger imperiously
Are taxed and threatened as her traitors: this

Must we now answer with a brow as free

And tongue as keen, seeing how his queen in him

Desires the charge and wardship of our prince

Which we must nowise grant.

Maitland. For fear's sake, no,
Nor for her threats, which rather may

pluck on
More present peril, of more fiery foot,

To the queen's life; yet surer might we stand

Having the crown's heir safe and girt about

With foreign guard in a strange land, than here

Rocked in the roar of factions, his frail head

Pillowed on death and danger; which once crushed,

And that thin life cut off, what hand puts forth

To take the crown up by successive right

But theirs that would even now dip violent hand

In the dear heart's blood of their kinswoman,

That it might take this kingdom by the throat

When she were slain? and rather by our mean

Would they procure her slaying than by their own

Make swift the death which they desire for her,

And from our hands with craft would draw it down

By show of friendship to her and threat of arms

That menace us with mockery and false fear

Of her deliverance by their swords, whose light

Being drawn and shining in our eyes should scare

Our hearts with doubt of what might fall if she

Stood by their help rekingdomed, and impel

Even in that fear our hands to spill her blood

That lag too long behind their wish, who wait

<p>Till seeing her slain of us they may rise up Heirs of her cause and lineage, and reclaim By right of blood and justice and re- venge The crown that drops from Stuart to Hamilton With no more let or thwart than a child's life Whose length should be their pleas- ure's: and with these Against our cause will England league herself If yet the queen live prisoner of our hands, And these her kin draw swords for her; but they, Though England know not of it, nor have eye To find their drift, would mix their cause with ours, If from the queen's head living we should pluck The royal office, and as next in blood Instate them regents; who would reign indeed Rather by death's help, if they might, and build On her child's grave and hers their regency, Than rule by deputation; yet at need Will be content by choice or leave of us To take the delegated kingdom up And lack but name of king: which being installed I doubt they think not long to lack, or live Its patient proxies ever. So the land, Shaken and Sundered, looks from us to these, From these again to us-ward, and hears blown Upon the light breath of the doubtful hour Rumors of fear which swell men's hearts with wrath To hear of southern wars and counsels hatched That think with fright to shrink them up, and bind Their blood's course fast with threats. Let England know,</p>	<p>Her menace that makes cold no vein of ours May heat instead the centre and the core Of this land's pulse with fire, and in that flame The life we seek not and the crown it wears Consume together. France will rest our friend, Whether the queen find grace to live in bonds, Or bleed beneath our judgment; &c that comes On errand thence to reconcile with us Her kin that stand yet on the adverse part Hath but in charge to do her so much good As with our leave he may, and break no bond That holds us firm in friendship; if we will, She may be held in ward of France, and live Within the bound there of a convent wall Till death redeem her; but howe'er he speed Who hath commission with what power he may To make of our twain factions one such league As may stand fast and perfect friend with France, And in what wise by grace of us he may To do our prisoner service and entreat That grace to drop upon her, this main charge He needs must keep, to hold allied in one Scotland and France, and let our hand not plight Fresh faith instead with England; so for us From France looks forth no danger though she die, For her no help; and these void Eng- lish threats, That bring no force to back them but their own</p>
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And find not us unfriended, do but blow	For the false fruit's sake of her fatal womb,
The embers that her life still treads upon	The seed of Bothwell, that with her should burn
Which being enkindled shall devour it.	Rather than bring forth shame, and in this land
<i>Morton.</i> Ay,	Become a root of wars unborn and fire Kindled among our children.
And each day leaves them redder from the breath	<i>Maitland.</i> Nay, this plea Can be but somehow to defend her life,
That through the land flies clamorous for her blood	And put back judgment: never could she think,
From lips which boast to bear upon them laid	Though love made witless whom the world found wise,
The live coal burning of the word that God	His seed might reign in Scotland.
Gives them to speak against her; the south towns	<i>Morton.</i> We are not
Are full of tongues that cry on our delay	So barren of our natural brood of kings As to be grafted from so vile a stock,
To purge the land plague-stricken with her life;	Though he were now cut off who grows yet green
He first who never feared the face of man,	Upon the stem so shaken and pierced through
John Knox, and Craig his second, fill men's ears	With cankers now that gnaw the grain away.
With words as arrows edged and winged to slay;	Nor if the child whom, whatsoever he be,
And all the wide-mouthed commons, and more loud	We for the kingdom's comfort needs must seem
The women than their men, stretch their shrill throats	To take for true-begotten, and receive As issued of her husband's kingly blood,
With cries for judgment on her: and herself,	Should live not to take up with timely hand
As parcel of the faction for her death, Takes part with them against her friends, and swears	The inheritance whereto we hold him born;
To the English envoy who was charged by stealth	Should the crown therefore by his death derive
To plead with her for mercy on her life And privily persuade her, as we find,	To the queen's kin, or hand of Hamil- ton
To cast out Bothwell from her secret thought,	Assume the state and sway that slides from his,—
She would die first ere so divorce her soul	His father hath a brother left alive, The younger son of Lennox, who might put
From faith and hope that hangs on him, and feeds	More hopefully his nephew's title on Than leave it for the spoil of hungry hands
Her constant spirit with comfort which sustains	That would make war upon our present state,
His child alive within her; for she thinks	Unseat the rule of stablished things, unmake
Haply to move men's hearts even by the plea	The counsel and the creed whereby we stand,
That hardens them against her, being believed,	

And Scotland with us, firm of foot and free	The council govern of our trustiest heads;
Against the whole face of the weaponed world:	While in safe ward of England or of France,
But this boy's crown shall be a golden ring	Far from his kindred, might her son grow safe,
To hoop and hold our state and strength in one,	And under strange and kindlier suns his strength
And with the seemly name of king make sure	Wax ripe to bear a kingdom. To this end,
The rent bulk of our laboring commonwealth,	Save Bothwell's life I see no present let,
And solder its flawed sides; his right of reign	Who lives her shame and danger, but being slain
Is half our gift who reign in him, and half	Takes off from her the peril of men's tongues,
His heritage of blood, whose lineal name	And her more perilous love that while he lives
Shall not by note of usurpation strike	It seems will never slacken till her life
With strangeness or offence the world's wide ear	Be made a prey for his, but in his death
That hears a Stuart our prince's uncle crowned	Dies, or lives stinging after: wherefore most
In the dead child's succession, and this state	It now imports us to lay hand on him,
Made safe in him and stable to sustain	And on that capture to proclaim divorce
With chance abroad may range or breed at home	Between them ere he die, as presently
Of force to shake it.	His death should seal it and his blood subscribe.
<i>Maitland.</i> While the child lives yet,	So might she live, and bring against our cause
A nearer hope than of his father's kin	No blame of men or danger.
Looks fairer on us; yet in that life's wreck	<i>Morton.</i> In my mind,
This rope might hold at need.	Better it were to crown her son for king,
<i>Morton.</i> Ay, or we fall,	And send her for safe keeping hence in guard
Who stand against the house of Hamilton	To live in England prisoner, while we stand
In this man's name, — his kinsman Ruthven, Mar,	As safe from her as blameless of her blood,
Myself and Athol, who sustain his cause	Who reigning but in name on us should reign
Against their part alone.	Indeed on all our enemies' hopes, and turn
<i>Maitland.</i> So do you well;	From us the hopeless hearts of half our friends
Yet had I rather on the queen's appeal,	For the bare name's sake of her seeming reign
In her dead father's and her young child's name	And mask of false-faced empire.
Pleading for life, with proffer to resign	<i>Maitland.</i> As I think,
Her kingdom to the council's hands or his	The main mind of the council will not bend
Whom it may mark for regent, she might live	To any reason on our parts proposed
Even yet our titular queen, and in her name	

For her removal hence or titular reign,	To seal some part yet of this secret up—
Nor with the breath of our advice be blown	How dearly Bothwell held those privy scrolls
Beside their purpose. If the queen consent	Preserved as witness to confound at need
That her son's head be hallowed with her crown,	The main part of his judges, and abash Their sentence with their clear com- plicity
And hers he bare before him, she shall live,	In the crime sentenced? yea, so dear a price
And that close record of her secret hand,	He set on these, that flying for life he sends
The proofs and scriptures in her casket locked	Dagleish his trustiest servant from Dunbar
That seal her part in Darnley's blood- shedding,	To bring again from Balfour's hands to his
Shall yet lie dumb in darkness; else, I dread,	The enamell'd casket in whose silver hold
She shall be tried by witness in them writ,	Lay the queen's letters and the bond subscribed
And each word there be clamorous on men's tongues	Which at Craigmillar writ a live man dead.
As the doom uttered of her present death.	This was a smooth and seasonable hour
And not more instant should her judg- ment be	For one of so soft spirit and tender heart
Than her swift execution; for they think,	To send and seek, for love of good days gone,
I know, to find no safety while she lives;	A love-gift that his lady brought from France
So that in no case shall she pass alive Out of this realm while power is in their lips	To hold sweet scents or jewels; and the man
To speed or stay her.	That to his envoy so delivered it, And sent our council warning to way- lay
<i>Morton.</i> They shall never think To set before all eyes the whole tale forth	And where to intercept it,—this was one
In popular proof and naked evidence To plead against her: Balfour, that be- trayed	Meet for such trust and amorous offices, Balfour, that, yielding us the castle up,
Her counsels to us, should then have done more scathe	Yields likewise for a sword into our hands
Than ever he did service. They must know	To take by stroke of justice the queen's life
It were not possible to let this proof Stand in the sun's sight, and such names be read	His witness with what words she tempted him
For partners of her deed and not her doom	From her own lips, how lovingly and long,
As Huntley's and Argyle's. Have they not heard—	To kill her husband; yet he durst not; then
What should suffice to show if there be cause	How at her bidding he might well take heart,

She said, to do it; yet he stood fearful
off;
Whereat she brake into a glimmering
wrath
That called him coward, and bade him
live assured,
If his tongue ever let this counsel forth,
By her sure mean and suddenly to
die.

Mailland. This were a sword to drink
her life indeed,
But that my hope is better of the lords
Than that their heart is fixed upon her
death;
And for the commons and their fiery
tongue,
The loud-lipped pilot of their windy
will,
This famine of their anger shall feed
full,
And slake its present need but with the
spoil
Made of the piteous remnants of her
faith
By the stout hand here of their friend
Glencairn,
Who from this chapel of her palace
rends
All holy ornament, grinds down with
steel
The images whereon Christ dies in
gold,
Unsanctifies her sovereign sanctuary,
Unmoulds her God, and mints and
marks him new,
And makes his molten chalices run
down
Into strange shape and service: this
should ease,
Meseems, the hunger of the hate they
bear
That creed for which they held her
first in hate.
And, for the secular justice to be done
For his death's sake whom all these
loathed alive,
It should content them that the trial
has passed
On those we held in hand, and by this
test
The man whose marriage masque on
that loud night
Was pretext for the queen to lie apart

From the near danger of her husband's
bed,
Sebastian, stands approved as innocent
And no part of her purpose; while the
twain
Who bore the charge that was to load
with death
The secret house, and to their master's
hands
Consigned the mean of murder, have
endured
The perfect proof of torture, and con-
fessed
In the extreme pang of evidence en-
forced
The utmost of their knowledge.
Morton. These may serve
To allay men's instant angers; but
much more
His face should profit us whom France
detains
With suit and proffer from the queen-
mother
With all their force and flower of war
or craft
To help him to the crown of his own
land,
Or throne at least of regency therein,
If he will take but France for constant
friend,
And turn our hearts with his from
England: this
Would Catherine give him for his
friendship's sake
Who gives her none for all this, but
his hope
Cleaves yet to England, though for
fraud or fear
Again it fail him. So being foiled and
wroth,
He hath, she tells him, a right English
heart,
And in that faith withholds him craftily
From his desired departure and re-
turn,
Which should be more of all this land
desired
Than of himself. This Elphinstone
that comes
For him from Paris, in his master's
name
To plead as in her brother's for the
queen,

Bears but the name of Murray in his mouth,	Than to the sole weal of his natural land,
Whose present eye and tongue, whose spirit and mind,	That hath more need he should take thought for her
Our need of him requires. When their intent	Than one of these or the other. If the lords
Shall by the lords in council be made known	Be purposed, as I guess, to bid the queen,
To him that stands here for Elizabeth,	Ere this month end, make choice of death or life, —
How in her name will he receive the word	To live uncrowned, and call her young son king,
That but from Murray's lip she thinks to hear,	Or die by doom attained, — none but he
And then determine with what large response	By her submission or her death must rise
For peace or war she may resolve herself?	Regent of Scotland; and each hour that fits
<i>Maitland.</i> If she shall find our council one in will	With louder tongue requires him, and rebukes
To shed by doom of judgment the queen's blood,	His tardiness of spirit or foot to flee
Even by Throgmorton's mouth I am certified	By swift and private passage forth of France
That she will call on France to strike with her	To where our hearts wait that have need of him.
For this their sister's sake, and join in one	
Their common war to tread our treason down;	SCENE II. — LOCHLEVEN CASTLE.
Or, if she find not aid of France, from Spain	<i>The QUEEN and MARY BEATON.</i>
Will she seek help to hold our French allies	<i>Queen.</i> I would I knew, before this day be dead,
With curb and snaffle fast of Spanish steel,	If I must live or die. Why art thou pale?
For fear their powers against her lend us might	It seems thou art not sad, though I sit here,
That would not lend against us; she meantime,	And thou divide my prison; for I see
While Philip's hand hath France as by the harr,	Thine eye more kindled, and thy lip more calm,
Shall loosen on us England, to redeem That forfeit life which till the day of fight	And hear thy voice more steadfast, than it was
Her trust is but in Murray to preserve, Seeing he spake never word in English ear	When we were free of body: then the soul
Against this queen his sister.	Seemed to sit heavy in thee, and thy face
<i>Morton.</i> Being returned,	Was as a water's wearied with the wind,
He shall bear witness if his heart be bent	Dim eye and fitful lip, whereon thy speech
Rather to this queen's love or that queen's fear	Would break and die untimely. Do these walls,
	And that wan wrinkling water at their foot,

For my sake please thee? Thou
shouldst love me well,
Or hate, I know not whether, if to
share

The cup wherein I drink delight the lip
That pledges in it mine.

Mary Beaton. If I be pale,
For fear it is not, nor for discontent,
Here to sit bounded: I could well be
pleased

To shoot my thoughts no farther than
this wall

That is my body's limit, and to lead
My whole life's length as quiet as we
sit

Till death fulfilled all quiet, did I
know

There were no wars without, nor days
for you

Of change and many a turbulent chance
to be

Whence I must not live absent.

Queen. Hast thou part,
Think'st thou, as in time past, predestinate

In my days and chances?

Mary Beaton. Yea, I know it.

Queen. If thou have grace to prophesy,
perchance

Canst thou tell too how I shall fare
forth hence,—

If quick or dead? I had rather so
much know

Than if thou love or hate me.

Mary Beaton. Truly, then,
My mind forecasts with no great questioning

You shall pass forth alive.

Queen. What, to my death?

Mary Beaton. To life, and death that
comes of life at last:

I know not when it shall.

Queen. I would be sure
If our good guardian know no more
than thou:

I think she should; yet if she knew I
think

I should not long desire to know as
much,

But the utmost thing that were of her
foreknown

Should in mine eye stand open.

Mary Beaton. She is kind.

Queen. I would she were a man that
had such heart:

So might it do me service.

Mary Beaton. So it may.

Queen. How? in her son? Ay,
haply, could I bring

Mine own heart down to feed their
hearts with hope,

They might grow great enough to do
me good.

I tell thee yet, I thought indeed to die
When I came hither. 'Tis but five

weeks gone,—
Five, and two days: I keep the count
of days

Here; I can mind the smell of the
moist air

As we took land, and when we got to
horse

I thought I never haply might ride
more,

Nor hear a hoof's beat on the glad
green ground,

Nor feel the free steed stretch him to
the way,

Nor his flank bound to bear me: then
meseemed

Men could not make me live in prison
long;

It were unlike my being, out of my
doom;

Free should I live, or die. Then came
these walls,

And this blind water shuddering at
the sun,

That rose ere we had ten miles ridden;
and here

The black boat rocked that took my
feet off shore,

And set them in this prison; and as I
came

The honey-heavy heather touched my
sense

Well-nigh to weeping: I did think to
die,

And smell naught sweeter than the
naked grave.

Yet sit we not among the worms and
roots,

But can see this much,—from the round
tower here,

The square walls of the main tower
opposite,

And the bare court between; a gracious sight.	Is good to have, a goodly stay — and yet
Yet did they not so well to let me live,	I do not greatly think I fear to die.
If they love life too; I will find those friends	I do not put off life yet; if I live,
That found these walls and fears to fence me with	For one thing most shall these men pay me dear, —
A narrower lodging than this seven feet's space	That I was ever touched with fear of death.
That yet I move in, where nor lip nor limb	Thou hast heard how seeing a child on the island once,
Shall breathe or move forever.	Strayed over from the shore, I cried to him
<i>Mary Beaton.</i> Do you think	Through the pierced wall, between five feet of stone,
You shall not long live bound?	To bid my friends pray God but for my soul,
<i>Queen.</i> Impossible.	My body was worth little; and they thought
I would have violent death, or life at large;	I was cast down with bitter dread of heart:
And either speedy. Were it in their mind	Please God, for that will I get good revenge.
To slay me here and swiftly, as I thought,	I dream no more each night now on my lord,
Thou wouldst not here sit by their leave with me:	And yet God knows how utterly I know
They get not so much grace who are now to die,	I would be hewn in pieces — yea, I think —
And could not need it; yet I have heard it said	Or turned with fire to ashes for his sake:
The headsman grants what sort of grace he may —	Surely I would.
A grievous grace — to one about to bleed	<i>Enter</i> LADY LOCHLEVEN.
That asks some boon before his neck lie down;	<i>Lady Lochleven.</i> Good morrow to your grace.
Thy face was haply such a boon to me, Being cradle-fellows and fast-hearted friends,	<i>Queen.</i> Good madam, if the day be good or no
To see before I died, and this the gift Given of my headsmen's grace. what think'st thou?	Our grace can tell not; while our grace had yet
<i>Mary Beaton.</i> Nay,	The grace to walk an hour in the sun's eye
That I know naught of headsmen.	With your fair daughters and our bed-fellows
<i>Queen.</i> Thou hast seen —	About your battlements that hold us fast,
It is a sharp, strange thing to see men die.	Or breathe outside the gateway where our foot
I have prayed these men for life, thou knowest, — have sent	Might feel the terrace under, we might say
Prayers in my son's and my dead father's name,	The morn was good or ill: being here shut up,
Their kins that were and shall be, and men say	We make no guesses of the sun, but think
One was well loved of the people, and their love	To find no more good morrows.

Lady Lochleven. Let your grace
Chide not in thought with me; for this
restraint,
That since your late scarce intercepted
flight
Has been imposed upon me, from my
heart
I think you think that I desired it not.

Queen. Ay, we were fools, we Maries
twain, and thought
To be into the summer back again,
And see the broom blow in the golden
world,—

The gentle broom on hill. For all
men's talk
And all things come and gone yet, yet I
find

I am not tired of that I see not here,—
The sun, and the large air, and the
sweet earth,

And the hours that hum like fire-flies
on the hills

As they burn out and die, and the
bowed heaven,

And the small clouds that swim and
swoon i' the sun,

And the small flowers. Now should I
keep these things

But as sweet matter for my thoughts in
French.

To set them in a sonnet: here at home
I read too plain in our own tongue my
doom,

To see them not, and love them.
Pardon me:

I would have none weep for me but
my foes,

And then not tears. Be not more dis-
content

Than I to think that you could deem
of me

As of one thankless; who were thank-
less found,

Not knowing that by no will or work of
yours

I sit suppressed thus from the sun: 'tis
mine,

My fault that smites me; and my
masters' will,

Not mine or yours, it is, that for my fault
Devised this penance; which on me

wrought out
May fall again on them.

Lady Lochleven. Madam, alas!
I came on no such errand to your
grace

As lacked more words to make it sad
than those

It was to speak; and these have I put
back

Too long and idly. Here are now at
gate

Three messengers sent from the parlia-
ment

To speak with you.

Queen. With us to speak? you know,
Nor chamberlain nor herald have we
here

To marshal men before us. Let them
come,

Whom all our kingdom left could keep
not out

From this high presence-chamber. Stay:
I would not

Be stricken unaware, nor find in you
That which I thought not; it were out
of kind,

Unwomanlike, to give me to their
hands

Who came to slay me, knowing not
why they came;

Is it for that?

Lady Lochleven. God's grace forbid
it! nay—

Queen. I ask if they bring warrant
for my death?

I have seen such things and heard, since
leaves bloomed last,

That this were no such marvellous
thing to hear.

But if this be, before I speak with them,
I will know first.

Lady Lochleven. Let not your high-
ness dread—

Queen. I do not bid you put me out
of dread.

Have you not heard, and hear? The
queen desires

To know of her born subject till she
die,

And keeper of her prison, if these men
Be come to slay her.

Lady Lochleven. They come to bid
your grace—

Queen. Bid my grace do their bid-
ding? that is like:

That I should do it were unlike. I must live,
 I see, this some while yet. What men are these?
Lady Lochleven. The first, Sir Robert Melville; then the lords Ruthven and Lindsay.
Queen. Bid my first friend in, While one friend may be bidden; he, I think, Can come but friendlike.
 [Exit LADY LOCHLEVEN.
 What should these desire?
 One head of theirs I swore last month to have,
 That then beheld me, some day, if that hand
 Whereon I swore should take not first my life.
 And one, the son of him that being nigh dead
 Rose from his grave's edge to pluck down alive
 A murdered man before him, — what should he
 Bring less than murder, being his father's son,
 In such a hand as his that stabbed my friend?
Mary Beaton. Perchance they come to take your crown, not life.
Queen. What, my name too? but till I yield it them,
 They have but half the royal thing they hold,
 The state they ravish; and they shall not have
 My name but with my life; while that sits fast,
 As in my will it sits, I am queen, and they
 My servants yet that fear to take my life;
 For so thou seest they fear; and I did ill,
 That in first sight of present-seeming death
 Made offer to resign into their hands
 What here is mine of empire: I shall live,
 And being no queen I live not.
Enter SIR ROBERT MELVILLE.
 Welcome, sir;

I have found, since ever times grew strange with me,
 Good friends of your good brother and yourself,
 And think to find. What errand have you hero?
Sir R. Melville. Let not your majesty cast off the thought
 Which calls me friend, though I be first to bear
 An evil errand. 'Tis the council's mind
 That you shall live, and in their hand the proofs
 Shall die that plead against you —
Queen. Is this ill?
 I know not well what proof that man could show
 Would prove men honest that make war on faith,
 Show treason trusty, bleach rebellion white,
 Bid liars look loyal; and much less I know
 What proof might speak against me from their lips
 Whose breath may kill and quicken evidence,
 Or what good change of mind rebuke the lie
 That lived upon them; but that I must live,
 And of their proofs unspotted, sounds not worse
 Than if a friend had come to bear me word
 That I must die belied.
Sir R. Melville. Upon these terms
 Are they content for you to live in ward: —
 That you yield up as with free hand the crown
 And right of kingdom to your son, who straight
 At Stirling shall receive it from their hands;
 Else shall your grace be put to trial, and bear
 The doom ensuing, with what of mortal weight
 May hang upon that sentence.
Queen. Sir, methought
 This word of doom for shame's sake now was dead

Even in their mouths that first it soiled,
and made
Even shamelessness astonished; not
again

We thought to hear of judgment, we
that are,

While yet we are any thing, and yet
must be,

The voice which deals, and not the ear
which takes,

Judgment. God gave man might to
murder me,

Who made me woman, weaker than a
man;

But God gave no man right, I think, to
judge,

Who made me royal. Come then, I
will die :

I did not think to live. Must I die
here?

Sir R. Melville. Madam, my errand—

Queen. Ay, sir, is received

Here in my heart: I thank you; but
you know

I had no hope before; yet sounds it
strange

That should not sound, to die at such
men's hands,

A queen, and at my years. Forgive
me, sir:

Me it not comforts to discomfort you,
Who are yet my friend—as much as

man on earth—
If any, you—that come to bid me

die.

Sir R. Melville. Be not cast down so

deep: I have an errand

From the English queen, your friend,
and here ensheathed

By my sword's secret side, for your fair
hand

A letter writ from her ambassador
Praying you subscribe what thing my

comrades will,
Since naught whereto your writing was

compelled
Can hang hereafter on you as a chain

When but for this bond written you
stand free.

Queen. Ay, I know that: how speaks
Elizabeth?

Sir R. Melville. She bids you at all
times account of her

As a sure friend and helpful; has, I
know,

Indeed no mind to fail you.

Queen. This your comfort

Is no small comfort to me; I had
rather

Be bounden to her than any prince
alive.

Is it her counsel, then, that I subscribe
My traitors' writing? I will do it. But,

sir,

Of those that sit in state in Edinburgh
Which was it chose you for my com-

forter?
I know my lord of Morton would send

none;

It was the secretary?

Sir R. Melville. Madam, the same.

Queen. Did I not well then, think
you, when I cast

This body of mine between him and
the swords

That would have hewn his body? I
did think

He was my friend. Bid now mine ene-
mies in,

And I will sign what sort of shame
they will,

And rid them hence.

*Enter LINDSAY and the younger RUTH-
VEN.*

'Tis five weeks gone, my lord,
[*To LINDSAY.*

Since last we looked on you; for you,
fair sir, [*To RUTHVEN.*

A year I think and four good months
are sped

Since, at that father's back whose name
you bear,

I saw your face dashed red with blood.
My lords,

Ye come to treat with us ambassa-
dors

Sent from our subjects; and we cannot
choose,

Being held of them in bonds from
whom ye come,

But give you leave to speak.

Lindsay. Thus, briefly, madam:—

If you will live to die no death by
doom,

This threefold bond of contract that
we bring

<p>Requires your hand; wherein of your free will First must you yield the crown of Scot- land up To your child's hand; then by this sec- ond deed The place and name of regent through this realm To the earl of Murray shall you here assign, Or, if he list not take this coil in hand, Then to the council; last, this deed em- powers The lords of Mar and Morton with my- self To set the crown upon the young king's head. These shall you sign. <i>Queen.</i> These I shall sign, or die. But hear you, sirs: when hither you brought these, Burned not your hearts within you by the way Thinking how she that should subscribe was born King James's daughter? that this shameful hand, F'it to sustain nor sword nor staff o' the realm, Hath the blood in it of those years of kings That tamed the neck and drove with spurs the sides Of this beast people that now casts off me? Ay, this that is to sign, no hand but this Throbs with their sole inheritance of life Who held with bit and bridle this bound land, And made it pace beneath them. What are ye That I should tell you so, whose fathers fought Beneath my fathers? Where my grand- sire fell, And all this land about him, were there none That bore on Flodden, sirs, such names as yours, And shamed them not? Heard no men past of lords,</p>	<p>That for the king's crown gave their crown of life For death to harry? Did these grieve or grudge To be built up into that bloody wall That could not fence the king? Were no dead found Of that huge cirque wherein my grand- sire lay, But of poor men and commons? Yea, my lords, I think the sires that bred you had not heart As men have writ of them, but sent to fight For them their vassals visored with their crests, And these did well, and died, and left your sires That hid their heads forever and lived long, The name and false name of their deeds and death. How should their sons else, how should ye, being born, If born ye be, not bastards, of those lords Who gat this lying glory to be called Loyal, and in the reek of a false field To fall so for my fathers, — how, I say, Dare sons of such come hither, how stand here, From off the daughter's head of all those kings To pluck the crown that on my fathers' heads Ye say they died to save? I will not sign: No, let some Flodden sword dip in my blood; Here I sit fast, and die. — Good friend that was, [To SIR R. MELVILLE. Tell my great sister that you saw my hand Strive, and leave off to sign: I had no skill To shape false letters. <i>Ruthven.</i> Madam, no man here But knows by heart the height of your stout words And strength of speech or sweet all this breath</p>
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Can blow not back the storm yourself
 raised up,
 Whose tempest shakes the kingdom
 from your hand,
 And not men's hate. You have been
 loved of men;
 All faith of heart, all honor possible,
 While man might give, men gave you.
 Now those deeds
 Which none against your will enforced
 you do
 Have set that spirit against you in
 men's minds,
 That till you die (as then your memory
 may),
 Nor your fair beauty nor your fiery
 heart
 Can lay with spells asleep.
Sir R. Melville (aside). I pray you,
 madam,
 Think on mine errand.
Queen. Wherefore should I sign?
 If I be queen that so unqueen myself,
 What shall it profit me to give my foes
 This one thing mine that hallows me,
 this name,
 This royal shadow? If I be no queen,
 Let me bleed here; as being uncrowned
 I know
 That I shall die of all your promises.
Lindsay. We came not, madam, to
 put force on you,
 And save your life by violence; but
 take note,
 [*Laying his hand on her arm.*]
 As in this hand your own is fast, and
 hath
 No power till mine give back its power
 again
 To strive or sign, so fast are you in
 ward,
 For life or death, of them that bid you
 live
 And be no queen, or die.
Queen. I thank you, sir,
 That of your love and courtesy have
 set
 This knightly sign upon my woman's
 flesh
 For proof if I be queen or no, that
 bear
 Such writing on my body of men's
 hands

To seal mine abdication. Sirs, read
 here:
 What need I sign again? Here may
 men see
 If she be queen of Scotland on whose
 arm
 Are writ such scriptures as I wist not
 yet
 Men's eyes might read on any woman
 born.
 Yet will I write, being free, to assure
 myself
 This is my hand indeed that wears the
 sign
 Which proves it vassal to the stronger.
 Sirs,
 Take back your papers; and albeit, my
 lord,
 The conquest you have made of me,
 henceforth
 Lift up your heart with pride, I pray
 you yet,
 Boast not yourself on women overmuch,
 Lest being their conqueror called, and
 praised for that,
 Men call you too their tyrant. Once
 and twice
 Have we grasped hands: the third
 time they shall cross
 Must leave one cold forever. Nay, I
 pray,
 Who may command not surely, yet I
 pray,
 Speak not, but go: ye have that ye
 came for; go,
 And make your vaunt to have found so
 meek a thing
 As would yield all, and thank you.
 [*Exeunt* LINDSAY, RUTHVEN, and SIR
 R. MELVILLE.
 Hast thou read
 Of sick men healed with baths of chil-
 dren's blood?
 I must be healed of this my plague of
 shame,
 This sickness of disgrace they leave
 with me,
 Bathing in theirs my body.
Mary Beaton. In such streams
 You have washed your hands already.
Queen. What, in war?
 Ay, there I have seen blood shed for
 me, and yet

Wept not nor trembled; if my heart
shrink now,

It is for angry pity of myself
That I should look on shame.

Mary Beaton. What shame, my
queen?

Queen. Thy queen? why, this, that I,
queen once of Scots,

Am no more now than thine. Call
back the lords:

I will unsign their writing, and here die;
It were the easier end.

Mary Beaton. It is your will —
Forgive me, madam — on this cause
again

To grapple with Lord Lindsay?

Queen. True, not yet;

Thou thought'st to make me mad,
remembering that;

But it hath made me whole. My wits
are sound,

Remembering I must live. When I
have slept,

Say I would gladly see the kindlier
face

Again of our dear hostess with her son
To put those angry eyes out of my
sight

That lightened late upon me; say, being
sad,

And (if thou wilt) being frightened, I
must find

The comfortable charities of friends
More precious to me. 'Tis but truth,
I am fain,

Being tired, to sleep an hour: mine
eyes are hot;

Where tears will come not, fire there
breeds instead,

Thou knowest, to burn them through.
Let me lie down;

I will expect their comforts in an hour.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. — HOLYROOD.

MAITLAND and SIR NICHOLAS
THROGMORTON.

Throgmorton. Why would your coun-
cil give no ear to me

Ere they rode hence so hot to crown
their prince?

Why hear not first one word?

Maitland. One threat the more
From your queen's lips bequeathed by
rote to yours,

Or one more promise? If we run her
course,

This queen will leave us in the briers,
we know,

There to lie fast or labor till the thorns
Have rent our flesh and raiment.

Throgmorton. Sir, take thought
If help were sent not at the siege of
Leith,

When France had grasped you by the
throat, and sea

To land gave battle, from that sove-
reign's hand

Whom now ye trust not.

Maitland. Ay, for her own ends
She cast the French out, and flung back
their power

Which here was deadly to her, and of
that deed

Had recompense with surety: but what
aid

Must we now look for of her, on whose
will

Hang all our enemies' hopes? I would
I had been

Banished seven years my country, and
your queen

On that condition had but as a friend
Dealt freely with us. Let her now
proclaim,

Her own seed failing, this our prince
her heir,

And England shall no less have care of
him

Than we his lineal servants; else, if
hence

We yield him to your keeping, men
will say

We have given our natural master to
be kept

As among wolves a sheep, and made
our hope

The fosterling of danger: and small
trust

Should we put in her that has newly
dealt

By secret message to subvert our state,
We know, with those indeed of our
queen's kin

From whose report we know it.

Throgmorton. What have they said?
Maitland. That you brought proffers
of her aid and love
To incite their arms, to quicken the
slow snake
Whose sting lies cold yet in their policy,
But watched and warmed of her with
hand and eye
The perfect poison should put forth,
and thrust
At once the hot and cloven tongue of
war
Even in our face and bosom; but for
fear,
It may be, or being yet at heart's root
Scots, —
For this or that cause, through false
heart or true,
So is it, that in doubt of your good
mind
Toward them or Scotland, in whose
breast you sought
To make the mutual swords of her own
sons
Clash as they crossed once more, drink-
ing her blood,
They sent us word of all your embassy.
Throgmorton. But you, whate'er these
thought or feigned to think,
Think no such foolish evil as fools
may, —
Deem not of England as the Scot who
deems
She hath no will, no line of life, no
hope,
No thought but Scotland's ruin, and
our queen
No sense of aught here done, — her
sister's doom,
The people's rage, the council's pur-
pose, — naught
But where to find in these a guileful
mean
To strike at Scotland? why, these fears
are old,
White-bearded dreams, suspicions long
grown gray,
Dangers and doubts toothless and eye-
less now
That fright nor babe nor dotard; and
your thought
Finds room for such? What profit
should she have
To turn your swords against each
other's throats,
And pick some privy chance of vantage
up
That fell between your factions at her
feet?
Such chance indeed of vantage might
there fall
For your own queen, who nowise has
been slow
To nurse the chance, and wait on it and
serve,
From strifes rekindled and requicken-
ing claims
Set each at each in England, whence
or craft
Or force might filch or seize for Scot-
land's sake
Some no less jewel than her eye ere
now
Was fixed so fast on, even the crown
that hangs
In doubt yet of unsure inheritance,
As hangs not yours for us to pluck at,
who,
Reign whoso may when this queen's
life is quenched,
In Scotland shall reign never.
Maitland. That I know,
And this no less: that he who reigns
shall reign
Never by right of England's leave or
love,
Her ward or servant; as, this queen
removed,
Haply ye hope her lineal heir might
be,
And in that hope work with these
Hamiltons
To strike at us in Mary's name, and
pluck
Death from our hands upon her; you,
your queen,
And they her kinsfolk, all ye seek her
death;
No word but of her freedom in your
mouths,
No end than this less looked for in
your hearts.
Speak to the council as but now to me,
Defy them in her cause, not all the
world
For three days' space shall save her

Throgmorton. Nay, not we
 Desire the queen's death at your hand
 provoked,
 But here from Tullibardine's mouth I
 know
 Her kin at secret heart desire no less;
 And will ye but allow their house its
 right
 By heritage to reign, no need, they say,
 To take more care for her, who privily
 May be put out of life, and no man
 more
 In that dead name be troubled; and
 again,
 If they with no such promise being
 assured
 Shall not join hands with you, and
 England then
 Shall bring the queen back whom ye
 spared to slay,
 Ye are lost, and they not winners.
 Therefore is it
 That of Lord Mar and of yourself I
 seek
 Help for the queen's deliverance, who
 being dead
 Can profit no man but your foes and
 ours
 That love not England more than they
 love you,
 Nor you than they love England: shall
 not both
 With their own cause take part?
Maitland. It is too late;
 What part should we take with you, to
 what end,
 Since all the council knows your traffic
 now
 With their chief foes, and how being
 there betrayed
 You can but bring us such a friendship
 back
 As they would none of?
Throgmorton. Sir, if yet you fear,
 If you suspect yet that our queen
 desires
 To speed the death of yours or make
 it sure
 By pleading for her, or by threat of war
 Denounced for her sake, let this letter
 be
 The seal and warrant of our single
 heart,

Wherein she threatens war, — but smile
 not yet, —
 If in his mother's name for him dis-
 crowned
 Ye crown the child that has but wailed
 one year.
 This should the lords have seen; but
 even for doubt
 Lest it should set their spirits on such
 fire
 As but her blood shed presently could
 slake,
 And this be deemed its aim indeed at
 heart
 And privy purpose of her hand who
 writ,
 Your eye alone must read that reads it
 now
 And the lord Murray's; for they know
 that send,
 And with it send me this for secret
 charge,
 They know the truth and heat of fiery
 will
 That urges our queen's heart upon this
 war,
 And for no end but for her sake who
 sits
 Held fast in bonds of her own subjects
 born,
 And with her all the majesty on earth
 That walks with monarchs, and no
 king alive
 But wears some shameful parcel of her
 chain.
Maitland. Though this be truth, yet
 they that hold it false
 Will join in wrath with them that hold
 it true,
 Even for the threat's sake and for
 shame, will join
 To write red answer in the slain
 queen's blood
 Back to the queen that threatens. Nay,
 herself
 Who sits in bonds yet of us will not
 yield
 To come forth singly safe, nor give
 consent
 That Bothwell should fare worse than
 she, or have
 More harm or danger; and being thus
 incensed,

<p>A three-edged weapon in the council's hand Is drawn to smite at need, a treble charge Whereon to impeach her: on that statute first Made of this land's religion seven years since, Which though she signed not, yet its breach in her Shall stand for guilt before them; and thereto Shall she be challenged of incontinence With more than Bothwell, who by noteless nights Have made her bed adulterous, and of each The proof that seals her shame in him, they say, Lies in their hand; last, of her murdered lord Their warrant cries against her; and from these No man may think to quit her nor secure, Save he that here comes timeliest for such toil As none beside may take upon his hand.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Enter MURRAY.</i></p> <p>Welcome, my lord, and to a land that lacks As never yet it lacked or looked for you. What comfort bring you for her wounds from France Besides that present help of hand and head We heard returned an hour since? <i>Murray.</i> Sir, thus much: As of our faith in France will in our cause Live, or die fighting; gold, and men in arms, Will flow thence on us in full stream and free If Scotland set but open hand or breast To greet them coming; they will buy our love At what best price they may. <i>Throgmorton.</i> But you, my lord, That have loved England ever, and that know</p>	<p>The worth and unworth weighed of either friend, French faith or English, will not surely buy With heavy hate of England the light love That France and fraud would sell you: nor for this Cast off the fortune and the peace unborn That may bind fast in one strong ring of sea Two jewels become one jewel, one such land As from the stout fort of a single heart Fixed like a sea-rock might look forth and laugh Upon the under wars of all the world, And see not higher the heads of kingdoms risen Than of small waves in summer? Will you pluck This hope out of the hopeful hand of time Ere he can gather,—this good fruit that grows On the green present branch of time's gray tree To feed the future where the hungry past Could get but blood for bread, and with bare steel Died starved and smitten? <i>Murray.</i> Sir, when I came in By secret flight from France, out of the guard Wherein I lived inwalled with watch of men That the court set about me to withhold My foot from England; when an English boat Had borne me oversea by secret night From privy port to port,—at the long last I saw your queen's face darken on mine own As on a servant favor-fallen, that came To take rebuke, and speak not; in her speech I found no note of favor, no good word, Nor honor such as late in France I found,</p>
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And finding fled from: sharply with
 strange eyes
 She glanced against me; taxed me with
 the bonds
 Wherein men held my sister; half a
 threat
 Was all her promise; I returned but
 this,—
 I would be still a Scotsman, and this
 land
 I had more mind to serve, and do her
 good,
 Than either of these queens; so parted
 thence
 Unfriendlylike, yet with no breach openly
 Proclaimed of friendship; and being
 here, my mind
 Is yet to serve no mistress but alone
 This earth my bones were bred of, this
 kind land
 Which moulded me and fostered; her
 strong milk
 Put manhood in my blood, and from
 my heart
 If she that nurtured need it now to
 drink
 I think not much to shed it. If those
 lords
 In whom her power now stands shall
 with one mouth
 Bid me put on this weight of regency,
 For no man's fear shall I deny them:
 she,
 Your queen, that threatens me with
 ignominy
 If I obey their choice and call, must
 know
 That to God only and my heart, those
 twain
 That are one eye to know me and to
 judge,
 Will I refer it; and of them being
 known
 That with pure purpose and no soiled
 intent
 I take this charge up, I will bear it
 through
 To the right end. Yet, ere my mind
 be fixed,
 I will behold her that was queen, and
 see
 How sits the spirit within her; but
 howe'er,

Till Bothwell in our hands lie trapped
 and dead
 She must not pass forth free; and we
 will hold
 No traffic for the bear's skin merchant-
 like
 Before the bear be caught; but if your
 queen
 Proclaim against us therefore war, be
 sure
 We will not lose our lives, yield up our
 lands,
 And bear repute of rebels through the
 world,
 Who might, how loath soe'er, in all
 men's eyes
 Make our cause clear as righteousness:
 the proofs
 Which in our hands lie darkling yet,
 but bear
 The perfect witness of those ill deeds
 past
 That bring her thus in danger of our
 doom
 And righteous peril of all-judging law,
 Must to the world's eye nakedly set forth
 What cause is hers, and ours; when if
 I stand
 In the king's likeness of the state elect,
 To him in me shall all knees bend, and
 hearts
 Kneel subjected; for them that hold
 apart,
 No head shall stand of any Hamilton
 That shall not bow before my sword or
 me.

SCENE IV. — LOCHLEVEN CASTLE.
The QUEEN and GEORGE DOUGLAS.
Queen. Will he be here to-day? Alas,
 my friend!
 I made my hope of this till he should
 come,
 And now he comes I would not look
 on him.
 I know not what put hope into my fear
 That this your mother's and my father's
 son
 Should do me good for evil.
George Douglas. Madam, I think
 The mind can be but good that mar-
 shals him

To your fair presence; nay, though
 even his soul
 Were damned so deep as to desire your
 death,
 He durst not come to show us his
 purpose here
 Who were not chosen for murderers
 at his hire,
 But guards and servants that would
 shed their lives
 Ere yours should look on danger.

Queen. That we know,
 And have no better wage than love to
 give,

Which more to give we grudge not,
 being so poor,
 Than from your queen's hands you
 disdain to take;

But what knows he? For aught our
 brother knows,
 Your mother and yourself are envious
 guards

That hate me for my faith as for my
 fault,

And hold your hands but till he bids
 you slay,
 Or yield me to my slayers. Ah! my
 last knight,

You shall do well to leave me at my
 need:

He will command you; when this
 brother knows

I am not hated, think you then my
 friend

Shall not be chidden from me?

George Douglas. When my life
 Is bidden from my body: not till then
 Shall I be found obedient.

Enter LADY LOCHLEVEN.

Queen. Be but wise,
 And wisdom shall not let you dis-
 obey.

Our noble hostess, you have borne a
 son,

I dare not say more noble, but I dare
 More simple, than his elders,—one
 whose heart

Stands fast when fortune stands not,
 and requires,

As other men do power and glory and
 gold,

No guerdon but the memory writ of
 him

To have been most true when fortun-
 e was most false,

And most to have loved whom she
 most hated: this

Shall not of them be written. Come
 you not

To bring one to me that shall never sin
 As he by faith and folly? I would say

Of my great brother and your kingly
 son

Nothing but good; yet can nor you
 nor I

Say that he loves me and my fallen
 estate

More than the power he comes to take
 from me,

Or rather from their hands that ere he
 came

Had rent it out of mine. Nay, look
 not sad:

You should be merrier than my mother
 might,

Were she now living.

Lady Lochleven. God shall witness
 me

What joy I have of such a guest, or
 pride

To be so stricken, madam, of your
 tongue

Chastising me for triumph: if my heart
 Exalt itself for this day's sake, God

knows,

Who hears you mock me.

Queen. Nay, I said no scorn;
 I had rather need to pray you in his

name
 Scorn not at me. Let him come in. I

know
 What ceremony my masters should put

on
 Were but to mock their servant.

Enter MURRAY, ATHOL, and MORTON.
 Sirs, you twain

That brought me two months since
 between you safe

Out of the town by night that sought
 my blood

Myself bid welcome; but she is not I
 That in this presence should make wel-

come here
 My father's son; nor shall my speech

usurp
 For modesty that office: yet indeed

I am glad, my lord, to see your face,
that must

Bring comfort, or an end of all this life
That yet needs comfort.

Murray. What I may, I will :

Yet haply shall you find not in my
words

Or death or comfort ; as you give them
heed,

Shall they prove comfortable or deadly.

— Sirs,

I have that to speak and hear that but
requires

The Lady Mary's ear and mine : I pray
you,

Take not offence that I crave leave to
say

We must for some space lack your
company.

Morton. My lord, the land that puts
her trust in you

Bids us obey, well knowing that love
nor fear

Shall bend you from her service.

Lady Lochleven. Sir —

Murray. Your will ?

Lady Lochleven. I am no parcel of the
sovereign state

That gives you of its greatness, nor
have right

To speak commandingly ; yet ere I go
I would desire you by what name I

may,

Look on this lady with such equal eyes
As nor the wrath and hate of violent

men,

Nor sense of evil done to this land's
peace

By her mischance and evil counsellors,
Nor (what I would not fear to find in

you)

Desire of rule with pride of station,
may

Divert to do her wrong, or glance aside,
From the plain roadway of that right-

eousness

Whose name is also mercy. This at
least

Surely by me may be of you required,
That in this house no wrong by word

or act,

By deed or threat, may touch her.

Murray. Be assured

No wrong shall ever touch her by my
hand,

And be content to know it.

Queen. Madam, these lords

Know that I thought ere this to find of
you

A mediatrix between me and your
son :

I have my hope, and with a humble
heart

I take your intercession thankfully.

[*Exeunt all but the QUEEN and MUR-*
RAY.

Murray. I would I had another cause
to speak,

Or you to listen, than this bitter theme
That brings us back together, though for

that

I had died a foreign man.

Queen. I thought not, sir,

When we last parted ere the break of
spring,

To meet you thus in summer ; but
these months

Have wrought things stranger on me.

Murray. Say, yourself

Have made of them more strange and
perilous use

Than is the fruit they bear. I am not
come

To flatter with you ; that I seek your
death

I think you fear not, yet should surely
know

The man that seeks were now more like
to speed

Than he that would preserve it.
Heaven and earth

As with the tongue of one same law
demand

Justice against you ; nor can pity
breathe

But low and fearful, till the right be
weighed

That must in pity's spite and fear's be
done,

Or this land never thrive. For that
right's sake,

And not for hatred or rebellious heart,
Do men require that judgment pass on

you,

And bring forth execution : the broad
world

Expects amazedly when we that rule
 Shall purge this land of blood, which
 now looks red
 In the world's eye, and blushing not
 for shame
 Blushes with bloodshed; in men's general
 mouths
 The name of Scot is as a man's attaind
 Of murderous treason, or as his more
 vile
 That for base heart and fear, or hire of
 gold,
 With folded hands watches the hands
 that slay
 Grow great in murder; and God's
 heavy doom
 Shall be removed not from us, nor his
 wrath,
 Well may we fear, shall lighten, till the
 deed
 That reeks as recent yet toward the
 fair heavens
 Be thoroughly cleansed with judgment.
Queen. Must I too
 Bleed to make Scotland clean of baser
 blood
 Than this she seeks of mine?
Murray. If you shall die,
 Bethink you for what cause, and that
 sole thought
 Shall seal your lips up from all pride
 of plea
 That would put in between your deed
 and doom
 The name of queen to cover you. No
 age
 That lived on earth red-handed with-
 out law
 Ever let pass in peace and unchastised
 Such acts as this that yet in all men's
 ears
 Rings as a cry unanswered. When
 your lord
 Lay newly murdered, and all tongues
 of friends
 Were loud in prayer to you to save
 your name
 From stain of accusation, and yield up
 That head to judgment which the whole
 world held
 Blood-guilty, first with subtle stretch of
 time
 Did you put back the trial, then devise
 To make it fruitless save of mockery;
 next,
 I cannot say for shame what shame
 foregone
 Moved you to put upon this loathing
 land
 That great dishonor to behold and bear
 The man your lover for its lord, and
 you,
 Queen of all Scots and thrall of one
 most base,
 While yet the ring was from his finger
 warm
 That sealed it first, and on his wedded
 hand
 The young blood of your husband, ere
 the print
 Had cooled of marriage or of murder, —
 you
 In the hot circle of his amorous arms
 A new-espoused adulteress. Will you
 say
 You were enforced or by false counsels
 bent
 To take him to your bosom? In what
 eye
 Was not the foregone commerce of
 your loves
 As bare as shame? what ear had heard
 not blown
 His name that was your sword and
 paramour,
 Whose hand in yours was now as steel
 to slay,
 Now as a jewel for love to wear, a
 pledge
 Hot from your lips and from your hus-
 band's heart?
 Who knew not what should make this
 man so proud
 That none durst speak against him of
 your friends
 But must abide for answer unaware
 The peril of the swords that followed
 him?
 Went he not with you where you went,
 and bade
 Men come and go, do this or do not,
 stand
 Or pass as pleased him, ere that day
 had risen
 Which gave the mockery of a ravished
 bride

To the false violence of his fraudulent rape	Or hope of vantage some that know will seem
That hardly she could feign to fear, or hide	To know not, and some eyes be rather blind
The sweetness of the hour when she might yield	Than see what eyeless ignorance in its sleep,
That which was his before, and in men's eyes	If but it would, must needs take note of: none
Make proof of her subjection? Nay, forbear;	Whose mind is maimed not by his own mere will,
Plead not for shame that force was put on you	And made perforce of its own deed perverse,
To bear that burden and embrace that shame	Can read this truth awry. What have you done?
For which your heart was hungry: foe nor friend	Men might weep for you, yea, behold- ing it,
Could choose but see it, and that the food desired	The eyes of angels melt: no tide of tears
Must be but mortal to you. Think on this, —	Could wash from hand or soul the sin- ful sign
How you came hither crowned these six years gone,	That now stands leprous there; albeit God knows
In this same summer month, and with what friends	Myself for very pity could be glad By mine own loss to ransom you, and set
Girt round about, and guarded with what hopes,	Upon your soul again the seal of peace, And in your hand its empire; but your act
And to a land how loving; and these years,	Has plucked out of men's hearts that fain would keep
These few brief years, have blown from off your boughs	The privilege of mercy. God alone Can lose not that forever, but retains For all sins done that cry for judgment here
All blossom of that summer, though nor storm	The property of pity, which in man Were mere compliance and confederacy With the sin pardoned. So shall you do best,
Nor fire from heaven hath wrecked nor wind laid low	Being thus advised, to entertain the hope
That stately tree that shadowed a glad land,	Of nothing but God's mercy, and hence- forth
But now being inly gnawn of worms to death,	Seek that as chiefest refuge; for in man
And made a lurking-place for poisonous things	There shall no trust deliver you, nor free
To breed and fester at its rotten root, The axe is come against it. None save you	Body nor soul from bonds. Weep not for that;
Could have done this, to turn all hearts and hands,	But let your tears be rather as were hers
That were for love's sake laid before your feet,	That wept upon the feet of God, and bought
To fire and iron whetted and made hot	With that poor price her pardon.
To war against you. No man lives that knows	
What is your cause, and loathes not; though for craft	

Queen. So, sir, I,
 If *ye* ~~ye~~ ^{ye} ~~were~~ ^{were} ~~great~~ ^{great} may buy it that
 That ~~ye~~ ^{ye} ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~wiser~~ ^{wiser} than I; nay,
 And have been ~~parsoned~~. I have done
 My name for shame to feed on, put
It is mine enemies' keeping, made my
 A prey and pasture for the teeth of
 I dare not say I wist not by what mean
 I should be freed of one that marred
 Who could by no mean else be quit of
 Save this blind way of blood: yet men
 More wise than I, men much less
 That led me to it, and left me; but
 I cite not them to extenuate by strange
 Mine own rash mind and unadvised-
 That brought forth fruit of death; yet
 What counsels led me by the hand,
 My wrath was fostered; and how all
 How utterly uncomforted, and girt
 With how great peril, when the man
 I stood, and found not you to counsel
 me,
 And no man else that loved; and in
 such need,
 If I did ill to seek to that strong hand
 Which had for me done evil,—if evil
 it were
 To avenge me of mine enemy,—what
 did they
 That by their hands and voices on his
 side
 Put force on me to wed him? Yet I
 say not,
 I was indeed enforced: I will not mock
 With one false plea my penitent heart,
 nor strive

With words as darken counsel, nor
 increase
 By foolishness your wisdom, to provoke
 A judgment heavier than I wait for:
 nay,
 You have not said that better thing of
 me
 That I may dare unsay; what most I
 would
 I must deny not: yet I pray you think,
 Even as might God, being just, what
 cause I had,
 What plea to lighten my sore load of
 sin,—
 Mismatched and misconciliated, and had
 seen
 Of my sad life not wholly nineteen
 years
 When I came hither crowned; as yet
 would God
 Your head, my brother, had endured
 for mine
 That heaviness of honor, and this
 hand
 The weight of Scotland, that being laid
 in mine
 Has fallen and left it maimed, and on
 my brows
 A mark as his whose temples for his
 crime
 Were ringed with molten iron! Take
 them now,
 Though but for pity of me that pray
 you take,
 And bear them better than I did; for
 me,
 Though no plea serve me in the sight
 of man,
 Nor grace excuse my fault, I am yet
 content,
 If I may live but so much time in
 bonds
 As may suffice for God to pardon me,
 Who shall not long put off to pardon,
 then
 Shut eyes and sleep to death.
Murray. I had thought to-night
 To speak no more with you, but let that
 hope
 Which only in God's name I gave you
 bear
 What fruit it might with prayer and
 watching: yet

<p>Take comfort, and assure yourself of life, And, if it may be, honor; one of these I may take on me to redeem, and one So as I may will I preserve from death Dealt of men's tongues that murder it. But you, Keep these things in your heart: that if you raise Within this realm a faction, or devise To break these bonds, I shall not keep an hour This power I have to save you; nor shall keep If France or England be by word of yours Stirred up to strike at our frail peace; nor yet If you shall cleave to him that should for shame As from this land be cast out from your heart: But if toward God your faults be faithfully In good men's sight acknowledged, and that life You led with your false lord, and all sins past, Loathed and lamented, and in days to be The living purpose in you manifest Of a more modest habit, and a life More nobly fashioned; if the slaughter done On your dead husband seem of you abhorred, And those ill days misliked wherein your fame Drank mortal poison from his murderer's hand, — If this be seen, and that your mind lives clear From counsel of revenge upon those lords Who sought your reformation, nor with hope Nor dangerous forethought of device to be Renews itself to do them some day wrong, — Then may you now sit safe, and un-reproved Expect an end of bondage; for at large</p>	<p>You cannot think to live yet, who in time May haply by repentance be restored, And, for your prison somewhere here endured, Find yet your throne again, and sit renewed More royal than men wist who saw the ship Put in from France that bore you. <i>Queen.</i> O my friend, O brother, found now father to me too, Who have raised and rebegotten me from death, By how much less I thank you for my life, Think so much more for honor I give thanks That you raise up the hope in me to have Which was nigh dead for shame. Oh! let me hold [<i>Embracing him.</i> My comfort in mine arms, and with dumb lips Kiss you my thanks: I looked for less than this, But yet for comfort of you. One thing more, Having so much, will I require, and cease, — Even for my son's sake and mine own to lay The charge upon you of this regency Which none might bear so noble, nor bring back Her peace again to Scotland, as I know Your hand shall bring; and, had I known betimes, I had not started from its curb aside, Nor set against its strength, in no good hour, The feebleness of mine. But if your heart Be large enough to let forgiveness in Of my wrongs done, and days of wanton will, Take this charge too, — to keep for me the forts Of all that was my kingdom: I would have Nothing of mine lie now not in your hand.</p>
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Keep too my jewels; all I had of
 worth,
 What help without you should I have
 of it,
 What profit or what surety? Let your
 heart
 Cast her not out who prays you of your
 grace,
 Take these in trust and me.
Murray. I may not these;
 But you, that put yourself into my trust,
 I will not fail.
Queen. Nay, you shall keep them too.
Murray. I would not put my hand
 forth uncompelled
 To take for life and death the burden
 up
 That burns as fire, and bows the back
 that bears
 As with an iron load; and certainly
 He that shall take this kingdom on his
 hand,
 I think, shall live not long: nor pride
 nor hope,
 But very love and strong necessity,
 Could only bow me down to obey their
 will
 Who should enforce on mine the task
 to bear
 This grievous office, that if Scotland bid
 I for her sake must bear till I may die.
 But if I be not bidden, for no love
 Or fear, or lust of kingdom, will I seek
 The labor and the grief of that great
 charge
 That I may live and feel not.
Queen. By my lips,
 That have no royal right to speak for
 her
 Now, think that yet she bids you, seeing
 none else
 To undo mine evil done on her, and
 heal
 The wounds mine enemies and myself
 have made
 In her sweet peace; she hath no stay
 but you:
 Whom other should she seek to? And
 for me
 Again I dare not urge you, but my
 heart
 Is turned into a prayer that pleads with
 yours
 To lend its weakness comfort of your
 strength
 By taking off its fears; these that break
 mine
 Can bow not yours: oh! take from me
 that weight
 Which were to you but sport and orna-
 ment, —
 The natural honor of a hand so strong
 And spirit elect of all men's souls alive
 To do a work imperial.
Murray. If not else
 But by me only may this land find
 peace,
 By me, then, shall it. For your private
 charge,
 Impute not to me for default of love
 That I beseech you lay no more on
 me
 Than public need enforces: in my trust
 Your treasures were no safer than they
 stand
 Now that I keep them not, and no
 man's tongue
 Can tax me with them as detained from
 you
 By fraud or usurpation; which mine ear
 Were loth to know was muttered.
Queen. But you see
 Nor they nor I have surety save in you:
 Let it be seen of them that else may
 doubt,
 How thankfully I trust you; even for
 that
 Do thus, to do me good in men's report
 When they shall see us at one: from
 mine own hand,
 Except you take them, shall they not be
 rent
 By craft or force of hidden or harrying
 hands
 That could not wrest from yours what
 mine must yield
 For fault of you to help me?
Murray. As you will.
 I would not cross you where I might
 content:
 Yet willingly I cannot take on me
 More charge than needs of privy trusts
 to keep
 That bring men's blame about them;
 but in this
 My will shall be your servant.

Re-enter LADY LOCHLEVEN and
GEORGE DOUGLAS.

For this time
I take farewell: be patient, and seek
peace

Whence God may send it.—To your
gentler hand,

While yet the Lady Mary lives in ward,
Behooves not me commend her, being
but bound

As reverently as may beseem your son
In the state's name to charge you that
she find

At all men's hands that guard her now
about

Good usage with safe keeping; which
to assure

Shall hardly need this young man's
service here,

For whom the state has other use, and
I

A worthier work than still to keep such
watch

As porters use or pages.

Lady Lochleven. He and I

Stand at your bidding; yet were nowise
loth

The state that gave should take this
charge away

It laid upon us.

Queen. Sir, the grace you brought
And comfort, to me sorrowing and
afraid,

Go ever with you; and farewell.

Murray. Farewell.

[*Exeunt* LADY LOCHLEVEN and MUR-
RAY.

Queen. Will you not go?

George Douglas. Whither you bid,
and when, I will go swiftly.

Queen. With your lord and mine,

I would have said: yet irks it me to
say

My lord, who had none under heaven,
and was

Of these my lords once lady. Said I
not

You should do well to cast off care of
me,

Whom you must leave indeed now at
command

More powerful of more potent lips
than mine?

I would not have you set your younger
will

Against his word imperial; nor, I think,
Doth he fear that, who bids us come
and go,

And whose great pleasure is that you
part hence,

And I sit here. Be patient, and seek
peace,

You heard him bid me: patience we
must have

If we would rest obedient; and for
peace,

So haply shall we find it, having
learnt

What rest is in submission.

George Douglas. Bid me stay,

And that my will shall part not hence
alive

What need I swear?

Queen. Alas! your will may stay,

Your will may wait on me to do me
good,

Your loves and wishes serve me, when
yourself

Shall live far off. Our lord forbids
them not:

It is the service of your present hand,
The comfort of your face, help of your
heart,

That he forbids me.

George Douglas. And, though God
forbade,

Save by my death he should compel
me not

To do this bidding: only by your
mouth,

Of all that rule in heaven and earth,
will I

Be willingly commanded.

Queen. You must go.

Nay, I knew that: how should one stay
by me?

There was not left me, by God's wrath
or man's,

One friend when I came hither, in the
world.

And from the waste and wilderness of
grief

If one grain ripen,—from the stone and
sand

If one seed blossom,—if my misery
find

One spring on earth to assuage its fiery
lip, —

How should I hope that God or man
will spare

To trample or to quench it?

George Douglas. I am here
While you shall bid me live, and only
hence

When you shall bid me but depart and
die.

Queen. There was a time when I
would dream that men

There were to do my bidding, — such
as loved

And were beloved again, and knew not
fear

Nor hope but of love's giving; but
meseemed

That in my dream all these were cast
away,

And by God's judgment, or through
wrath of men,

Or mine own fault, or change and chance
of time,

I lived too long to look for love in
vain.

Many there are that hate me now of
men:

Doth one live yet that loves?

George Douglas. If one there were
That for your love's sake should abhor
his life,

Hating all hope save this, to die for
you, —

What should he do to die so?

Queen. If I bade
That for my love's sake he should love
his life,

And use its strength to cherish me,
who knows

If he would heed? or say I gave com-
mand

To do some ill thing or of ill report, —
Were it to slay our brother now gone
hence, —

Would one do that? I would not have
it done,

Though I should bid him. Do not
answer me

As though I questioned with you seri-
ously,

Or spake of things that might be
thought upon,

Who do but jest with grief as with my
friend,

That plays again familiarly with me,
And from the wanderings of a joyless
wit

Turn to clasp hands with sorrow. You
must go.

George Douglas. Ay, when you bid;
but were my going from you

Part of your grief, which is more grief
to me

Than my soul's going from forth my
body were,

I would not set my face from hence
alive.

Queen. I hold it not for no part of
my grief

To bid you from me: yet being here
bound in

As I with walls and waters, we should
find

Less help than yet I hope for of your
hand

Being hence enlarged. We will take
counsel, sir,

And choose, with no large choice to
make of friends, —

To whom we shall appoint you, — by
what mean

To deal for our deliverance: as, with
one

Once of my household, and this lady's
kin,

Who here of all my Maries the last
left

Partakes my bonds; the Laird of
Ricarton,

My husband's kinsman; and what readi-
est friends

Once more may be raised up, as when
I fled

From shame and peril, and a prison-
house

As hateful as these bonds, to find on
earth —

Ah! no such love and faith as yours in
man.

SCENE V. — HOLYROOD.

MURRAY and MORTON.

Murray. I am vexed with divers
counsels, and my will

Sees nor its way nor end. This act
 proclaimed
 That seals the charge of murder on the
 queen
 To justify our dealing had to it hands
 That here first met: Kirkaldy with
 Glencairn,
 Balfour with Maitland, Huntley with
 Argyle,
 True man with traitor,—all were as
 one mind,
 One tongue to tax her with complicity,
 Found art and part with them that
 slew her lord.
 Men praised the council for this judg-
 ment given
 As from a single and a resolute soul;
 Scarce one withstood save Herries,
 and his voice
 Was as a wind that sings in travellers'
 ears
 Unheeded: then the doom that gives
 to death
 All that in act maintain the former
 faith,
 And writes for Catholic traitor, should
 have purged
 The state of treacherous or of danger-
 ous friends
 Such as made protest then against this
 law,
 And fled from our part to the Hamil-
 tons,—
 Caithness and Athol, with the bishop
 called
 Of Murray, whom the Assembly met
 to judge
 By one same doom has with Argyle
 condemned
 To stand in sackcloth for adulteries
 past
 At Stirling through the time of service
 held
 Within the chapel royal. Such men's
 stay
 It irks not me to lose, who by their loss
 Were fain to win their enemies for my
 friends
 More fast and faithful; but men's sander-
 ous minds
 Nor council nor assembly can reknit,
 Though Knox there sit by Maitland,
 and Balfour

Touch sides with Craig; and while the
 state as now
 Lives many-minded and distraught of
 will,
 How shall its hope be stable?
Morton. Some there are
 Have all their will, or more than we
 that rule
 By secular wit and might: the preachers
 reign
 With heavier hand than ours upon the
 state,
 Who in this late assembly by their
 doom
 Bade your fair sister of Argyle partake
 The sackcloth penance of her slippery
 lord
 For scandal to the Kirk done when last
 year
 At the font's edge her arms sustained
 our prince
 For baptism of such hands as served
 the mass:
 If it have leave long to sit lawgiver,
 Their purity will pinch us.
Murray. Have no fear:
 It shall not Douglas; and we lack
 their help
 Who sway the commons only with
 their breath,
 Now most of all when our high coun-
 sels fail,
 And hopes are turned as 'twere to
 running streams
 That flow from ours to feed our ene-
 mies' hands
 With washings of our wreck, waifs of
 our strength,
 That melts as water from us. Those
 chief twain
 Whose league I sought by marriage,
 and had hope
 To bind them to us as brethren, when
 Argyle
 With me should knit himself anew, to
 wed
 His brother to the sister of my wife
 With happier hope than he espoused
 mine own,
 While Huntley's son should lead my
 daughter home,
 And with this fourfold knot our loves
 be tied,

And fortunes with each other's growth
 ingrafted,—
 Both these look back now toward the
 Hamiltons
 To mingle factions with them, being
 assured
 Our hands now lack the secret sword
 we had
 To draw at need against them, since
 their names
 Set at Craigmillar to the bond of blood
 Are with that bond consumed, and no
 tongue left
 To wag in witness of their part of guilt.
 Now Bothwell's knaves are hanged
 that laid the train,
 And Hay with them, and one most
 near his trust,—
 His kinsman Hepburn, from whose
 mouth condemned,
 And Ormiston's, we have confession
 wrung
 That marks with blood as parcel of
 their deed
 More than Balfour that in the assembly
 sit,
 And must partake his surety. This, my
 lord,
 Craves of us care and counsel, that our
 names
 Be writ not fool or coward, who took
 in hand
 Such trust to work such treason.
Morton. Nay, no Scot
 Shall say we fell from faith or treach-
 erously
 Let men's hopes fade that trusted us,
 and sank
 Through feebleness of ours: yet have
 we strength
 To lower the height of heart and confi-
 dence
 That makes their faction swell, who
 were but late
 Too faint of spirit, too fearful and un-
 sure,
 To be made firm with English subsi-
 dies.
 Three thousand marks, that Scrope by
 secret hand
 Sent from Carlisle to Herries, could
 not serve
 To give or shape or sinew to their plots

Who are now so great their houses'
 heir must wed
 No lower than a queen, and Both-
 well's wife,
 For this divorced or widowed.
Murray. Ay; we know
 The archbishop his good uncle with
 this youth
 Hath in Dumbarton fortified himself;
 And while they there sit strong and
 high in hope
 Our prisoner and our penitent late, we
 bear,
 Grows blithe of mood and wanton;
 from her sight
 Have I dismissed my mother's youngest
 born,
 Lest in her flatteries his weak faith he
 snared
 And strangled with a smile; and for
 her hand
 I have found a fitter suitor than
 Arbroath
 When she shall wed again, within
 whose veins
 Some drops of blood run royal as her
 own;
 Methuen, whose grandsire was the
 third that set
 His ring on that Queen Margaret's
 wedded hand
 From the seventh Henry sent ambassa-
 dress
 To our fourth James, to bring for
 bridal gift
 Her father's love and England's to her
 lord,
 And with the kiss of marriage on his
 lips
 To seal that peace which with her hus-
 band's life
 Found end at Flodden from her
 brother's hand
 That split the heart of Scotland. So
 the queen,
 If she wed Methuen, shall espouse a
 man
 Whose father of the same queen's
 womb was born
 That bore her father; and whose blood
 as hers
 Is lineal from the seed of English
 kings,

Through one same mother's sons, queen
 once of Scots,
 And daughter born and sister, though
 unqueened,
 Of those twain Henries that made
 peace and war
 With Scotland and her lord; and by
 this match
 The Hamiltons being frustrate of their
 hope
 Could yet not tax us with a meaner
 choice
 Than they would make for her, who
 while she lives
 Must stand thenceforth far off from
 their designs
 And disallied from all that in her name
 Draw now to head against us; and
 some help
 We need the more to cross them now,
 that France,
 To whom I thought to seek as to my
 friend
 And thence find aid in this necessity
 That else finds none, since England's
 jealous craft
 Puts in our enemies' hands gold for a
 sword
 More sharp than steel — France, that
 would send at need
 The choice of all her sons that hold our
 faith
 To live and die beside us here in arms,
 Grows chillier toward us than the chan-
 ging wind
 That brings back winter; for the brood
 of Guise,
 Our prisoner's friends and kinsmen of
 Lorraine,
 Prevail again on Catherine's adverse
 part,
 Whose hate awhile gives way to them,
 and yields
 Our cause into their hands that were
 more like
 To help this daughter of their danger-
 ous house
 Take up the crown resigned, and through
 their strength
 Renew this kingdom's ruin with her
 reign,
 Than send us aid and arms to guard its
 peace

From inroad as from treason: which I
 doubt
 We shall hear news of from my
 brother's tongue,
Enter SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS.
 Who comes without a herald.
Sir W. Douglas. Sir, the news
 Is dashed with good and evil equally,
 That here I bring you; for the treasons
 laid
 Have missed their mark, and left un-
 wounded yet
 My house's honor, that retains in trust
 So great a charge. You had word ere
 this of me,
 By what strange fortune was their plot
 made known,
 Who thought to fall upon us unaware,
 And find a ferry for some seventy
 swords
 To cross the lake in mine own barge
 surprised,
 And smite those thirty guards that hold
 the walls,
 And make a murderous passage for the
 queen
 To come forth free with feet that
 walked in blood;
 And how by one, a Frenchman of her
 train,
 Who, being not in their counsel, heard
 some speech
 Of such a preparation, and conceived
 This was a plot to take her from your
 hand,
 Laid by the fiercer faction of the Kirk
 That sought to snare and slay her in
 your despite,
 To me was all discovered; and be-
 times
 I gave command no barge thenceforth
 should pass
 Between the main shore and mine island
 walls,
 But a skiff only that with single oars
 Might be rowed over. Baffled thus,
 here friends
 Were fain to buy the boatman's faith
 with gold,
 Whom on suspicion I dismissed, but
 since,
 Finding less trust and service in the
 knave

That had his place, called back, and
 bade take heed
 Of these that would have won to their
 device
 A foundling page within my castle bred,
 And called by mine own name; who
 by this plot
 Should have seduced for them my sen-
 tinels,
 And oped the gate by night: but yet
 I find,
 For all toils set and gins to take their
 faith,
 In him and them no treason; yet so
 near
 Was treason to us, that not long since
 the queen
 Had well-nigh slipped beyond our guard
 by day,
 In habit of a laundress that was hired
 So to shift raiment with her; but being
 forth
 Betimes, as was this woman's use to
 come,
 In the low light by dawn, at such an
 hour
 As she was wont to sleep the morning
 out,—
 The fardel in her hand of clothes
 brought forth,
 And on her face the muffler,—it befell
 That as she sat before the rowers, and
 saw
 Some half her free brief way of water
 past,
 By turn of head or lightning of her
 look
 For mirth she could not hide, and joy-
 ous heart,
 Or but by some sweet note of majesty,
 Some new bright bearing and imperious
 change
 From her false likeness, so she drew
 their eyes
 That one who rowed, saying merrily,
Let us see
What manner of dame is this, would
 fain pluck down
 Her muffler, who to guard it suddenly
 Put up her fair white hands, which see-
 ing they knew,
 And marvelled at her purpose; she
 thereat,

A little wroth but more in laughter,
 bared
 Her head, and bade stretch oars and
 take the land
 On their lives' peril; which regarding
 not,
 They straight put back as men amazed,
 but swore
 To keep fast locked from mine of all
 men's eyes
 The secret knowledge of this frustrate
 craft,
 So set her down on the island side again,
 With muffled head and hidden hands
 to wring
 And weep apart for passion, where my
 watch
 Looks now more strict upon her; but I
 think,—
 For all her wrath and grief to be by
 chance
 From her near hope cast down and
 height of mind
 Wherein she went forth laughingly to
 find
 What good might God bring of her
 perilous hour,—
 She hath lost not yet nor changed that
 heart nor hope,
 But looks one day to mock us.
Murray. So I think;
 And in that fear would have you keep
 fast watch
 By night and day till we take off the
 charge
 Laid on your faith, and or enfranchise
 her
 Or change her place of ward; which,
 ere the spring
 That holds in chase this winter's flying
 foot
 Be turned to summer, haply shall be
 done.
 What fashion holds our mother with the
 queen?
Sir W. Douglas. As she was ever
 tender of her state,
 And mild in her own office, so she
 keeps
 Observance yet and reverence more
 than meet
 Save toward a queen, toward this her
 guest enforced,

Who smiles her back a prisoner's
thanks, and sighs
That should smile in prison; but 'twixt
whiles
Some change of mood will turn to
scorn or spleen
Her practised patience, and some word
take wing
Forth from her heart's root through her
lips that hath
The gall of asps within it; yet not
this
Turns the heart hard or bitter that
awaits
Her gentler change, pitying the wrong
it bears,
And her that wrongs it for the sorrow's
sake
That chafes and rends her.
Murray. Pity may she give,
And be praised for it; but to enter-
tain
Hope or desire that wars against her
trust
Should turn that praise to poison.
Have you seen
Since George went thence, or noted ere
he went,
In her no token of a mingled mind
That sways 'twixt faith and such a faith-
less hope
As feeds a mother's love with deadly
dreams
Of prophesying ambition? for in him
I spied the sickness of a tainted heart
And fever-fired from the most mortal
eyes
That ever love drank death of.
Sir W. Douglas. No, my lord.
Murray. I would fain trust her mind
were whole in this,
And her thoughts firm; yet would not
trust too far,
Who know what force of fraud and fire
of will
In that fierce heart and subtle, without
fear,
That God hath given so sweet a hiding-
place,
Make how much more the peril and the
power
Of birth and kinglier beauty, that lay
wait

For her son's sake to tempt her. We
will hold
More speech of this: here shall you
rest to-night. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.—LOCHLEVEN CASTLE.

The QUEEN and MARY BEATON.

Queen. Is it not sunset? what should
ail the day
To hang 'so long in heaven? the world
was blind
By this time yesternight. The lake
gleams yet.
Will the sun never sink, for all the
weight
That makes this hour so heavy?
Mary Beaton. While you speak,
The outer gate that stands till nightfall
wide
Shuts on the sundown; and they bring
the keys
That soon the page shall put into our
hand
To let in freedom.
Queen. I could weep and laugh
For fear and hope and angry joy and
doubt
That wring my heart. I am sick at
once and well.
Shall I win past them in this handmaid's
dress
If we be spied? My hood is over
broad;
Help me to set it forward: and your
own
Sits loose; but pluck it closer on your
face
For cloak and cover from the keen
moon's eye
That peers against us. Twice, thou
knowest, yea thrice,
God has betrayed me to mine enemies'
hands
Even when my foot was forth: if it slip
now,
He loves nor kings that hold his office
here
Nor his own servants, but those faith-
less mouths
That mock all sovereignties in earth or
heaven.
If here he fail me, and I fall again

To sit in bonds a year — by God's own truth,

I swear I will not keep this wall of flesh

To cage my spirit within these walls of stone,

But break this down to set that free from these,

That, being delivered of men's wrongs and his,

It may stand up, and gazing in his eyes Accuse him of my traitors.

Mury Beaton. Keep good heart.

Your hope before was feverish and too light,

And so it failed you: in this after-plot There is more form and likeness than in those

That left you weeping. Let not passion now

Foil your good fortune twice, or heat of mood

From keen occasion take the present edge,

And blunt the point of fortune.

Queen. If I knew

This man were faithful — oh, my heart that was

Is melted from me, and the heart I have Is like wax melting. Were my feet once free,

It should be strong again: here it sinks down

As a dead fire in ashes. Dare we think I shall find faith in him, who have not found

In all the world? no man of mine there is,

None of my land or blood, but hath betrayed,

Betrayed or left me.

Mary Beaton. Nay, too strange it were

That you should come to want men's faith, and look

For love of man in vain. These were your jewels,

You cannot live to lack them: nay, but less, —

Your common ornaments to wear and leave,

Your change of raiment to cast off, and bind

A fresher robe about you: while men live,

And you live also, these must give you love,

And you must use it.

Queen. So one told me once, —

That I must use and lose it. If my time

Be come to need man's love, and find it not,

I have known death make a prophet of a man

That living could foretell but his own end,

Not save himself, being foolish; and I too,

I am mad as he was, now to think on him

Or my dead follies. Were these walls away,

I should no more; ay, when this strait is past,

I shall win back my wits and my blithe heart,

And make good cheer again.

Enter PAGE.

Page. Here are the keys.

I had wrought instead a ladder for our need,

With two strong oars made fast across for fear

I had failed at last from under my lord's eye

To sweep them off the board-head here they ring,

As joy-bells here to give your highness note

The skiff lies moored on the island's lee, and waits

But till the castle boats by secret hands

Be stripped of oars and rowlocks, and pursuit

Made helpless, maimed of all its means; the crew

Is ready that shall lend us swifter wing Than one man's strength to fly with; and beyond

Your highness' friends upon the further bank

Wait with my master's horses. Never was

A fairer plot or likelier.

Queen. How thy face
Lightens! Poor child, what knowest
thou of the chance
That cast thee on my fortunes? it may
be
To death ere life break bud, and thy
poor flower
The wind of my life's tempest shall cut
off,
And blow thy green branch bare. Many
there be
Have died, and many that now live
shall die,
Ere my life end, for my life's sake; and
none
There is that knows, of all that love or
hate,
What end shall come of this night's
work, and what
Of all my life-days. I shall die in
bonds,
Perchance, a bitter death; yet worse it
were
To outlive dead years in prison, and to
loathe
The life I could not lose. This will
not be:
No days and nights shall I see wax and
wane,
Kindled and quenched in bondage, any
more:
For if to-night I stand not free on earth
As the sun stands in heaven, whose
sovereign eye
Next day shall see me sovereign, I
shall live
Not one day more of darkling life, as
fire
Pent in a grate, bound in with blacken-
ing bars,
But like a star by God hurled forth of
heaven
Fall, and men's eyes be darkened, and
the world
Stand heart-struck, and the night and
day be changed
That see me falling. If I win not forth,
But, flying, be taken of the hands that
were
Before laid on me, they shall never
think
To hold me more in fetters, but take
heart

To do what earth saw never yet, and
lay
By doom and sentence on their sover-
eign born
Death; I shall find swift judgment,
and short shrift
My justicers shall give me: so at least
Shall I be quit of bondage. Come, my
friends,
That must divide with me for death or
life
This one night's issue; be it or worst
or best,
Yet have ye no worse fortune than a
queen,
Or she than ye no better. On this hour
Hang all those hours that yet we have
to live:
Let us go forth to pluck the fruit of
this
That leans now toward our hand. My
heart is light:
Be yours not heavier; for your eyes
and mine
Shall look upon these walls and waves
no more. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII. — THE SHORE OF LOCH
LEVEN.

GEORGE DOUGLAS, BEATON, RICAR-
TON, *with Attendants.*

George Douglas. I hear the beat of
the oars: they make no haste.
How the stars thicken! if a mist would
take

The heaven but for an hour, and hide
them round —

Ricarton. How should they steer then
straight? We lacked but light.
And these are happy stars that sign
this hour
With earnest of good fortune; and
betimes
See by their favor where the prize we
seek

Is come to port.

*Enter the QUEEN, MARY BEATON,
Page, and a girl attending.*

Queen. Even such a night it was
I looked again for to deliver me,
Remembering such a night that broke
my bonds

Two wild years past that brought me
 through to this;
 The wind is loud beneath the mount-
 ing moon,
 And the stars merry. Noble friends,
 to horse;
 When I shall feel my steed exult with
 me,
 I will give thanks for each of your good
 deeds
 To each man's several love. I know
 not yet
 That I stand here enfranchised; for
 pure joy
 I have not laid it yet to heart: me-
 thinks
 This is a lightning in my dreams to-
 night,
 That strikes and is not, and my flat-
 tered eyes
 Must wake with dawn in bonds. —
 Douglas, I pray,
 If it be not but as a flash in sleep,
 And no true light now breaking, tell
 me you,
 That were my prison's friend: I will
 believe
 I am free as fire, free as the wind, the
 night,
 All glad fleet things of the airier ele-
 ment
 That take no hold on earth; for even
 like these
 Seems now the fire in me that was my
 heart,
 And is a song, a flame, a burning
 cloud
 That moves before the sun at dawn,
 and fades
 With fierce delight to drink his breath
 and die.
 If ever hearts were stabbed with joy to
 death,
 This that cleaves mine should do it,
 and one sharp stroke
 Pierce through the thrilled and trem-
 bling core like steel,
 And cut the roots of life. Nay, I am
 crazed,
 To stand and babble like one mad
 with wine,
 Stung to the heart and bitten to the
 brain

With this great drink of freedom; oh!
 such wine
 As fills man full of heaven, and in his
 veins
 Becomes the blood of gods. I would
 fain feel
 That I were free a little, ere that sense
 Be put to use: those walls are fallen
 for me,
 Those waters dry, those gaolers dead,
 and this
 The first night of my second reign, that
 here
 Begins its record. I will talk no more,
 Nor waste my heart in joyous words,
 nor laugh
 To set my free face toward the large-
 eyed sky,
 Against the clear wind and the climb-
 ing moon,
 And take into mine eyes and to my
 breast
 The whole sweet night and all the stars
 of heaven,
 But put to present work the heart and
 hand
 That here rise up a queen's. Bring me
 to horse:
 We will take counsel first of speed,
 and then
 Take time for counsel.
Beaton. Madam, here at hand
 The horses wait: Lord Seyton rides
 with us
 Hence to Queen's Ferry, where beyond
 the Forth
 We reach Claude Hamilton, who with
 fresh steeds
 Expects us; to Long Niddry thence,
 and there
 Draw rein among the Seytons, ere
 again
 We make for Hamilton, whose walls
 should see
 The sun and us together.
Queen. Well devised.
 Where is the girl that fled with us, and
 gave
 These garments for my surety? She
 shall have
 Her part in my good hour, that in mine
 ill
 Did me good service.

Ricarton. Madam, she must stay:
We have not steeds enough, and those
we have
May bear no load more than perforce
they must,
Or we not hope to speed.

Queen. Nay, she shall go,
Not bide in peril of mine enemies
here
While we fly scathless hence.

Girl. Most gracious queen,
Of me take no such care: I am well
content
They should do with me all they would,
and I

Live but so long to know my queen as
safe
As I for her die gladly.

Ricarton. She says well:
Get we to horse. I must ride south to
rouse
My kinsfolk, and with all our Hepburn
bands

Seize on Dunbar; whence northward I
may bear
Good tidings to your lord.

Queen. God make them good
That he shall hear of me, and from his
mouth
Send me good words and comfort! You
shall ride

Straight from Lord Seyton's with my
message borne
To all good soldiers of your clan and
mine,

And wake them for our common lord's
dear love
To strike once more, or never while
they live

Be called but slaves and kinless: then
to him
For whom the bonds that I put off to-
night

Were borne and broken. — Douglas, of
that name
Most tender and most true to her that
was

Of women most unfriended, and of
queens
Most abject and unlike to recom-
pense,

Take in your hand the hand that it set
free,

And lead me as you led me forth of
bonds
To my more perfect freedom. — Sirs, to
horse. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VIII. — HAMILTON CASTLE.

The QUEEN, ARGYLE, and HUNTLEY.
Queen. I ever thought to find your
faiths again

When time had set me free; nor shall
my love
To my good friends be more unprofit-
able

Than was my brother's, from whose
promised hand
Both have withdrawn the alliance of
your own

To plight once more with mine: your
son, my lord,
And, noble sir, your brother, will not
fail

Of worthier wedlock and of trustier
ties
Than should have bound them to a
traitor's blood,

His daughter, and the sister of his wife,
Whom he so thought to honor, and in
them
Advance his counsels and confirm his
cause,

Through your great names allied, who
now take part
More worthily with one long over-
thrown,

And late re-risen with many a true man's
more
And royally girt round with many a
friend's;

Nor need we lay upon our kinsmen
here
All our hope's burden, nor submit our
hand

To marriage with our cousin's of
Arbroath
For fault of other stay. For mine own
mind,

I would stand rather on Dumbarton
rock
Walled in with Fleming's spears, than
here sit fast

With these six thousand ranged about
the walls

That five days' suns have brought to
 strengthen me
 Since I fled hither in these poor same
 weeds
 That yet for need I wear. Now, by the
 joy
 I had that night to feel my horse be-
 neath
 Bound like my heart that through those
 darkling ways
 Shot sunwards to the throne, I do not
 think
 Thus to sit long at wait, who have the
 hands
 Subscribed here of so many loyal lords
 To take no thought but of their faith to
 me,
 Nor let dissension touch their hearts
 again
 Till I sit crowned as arbitress of all
 When the great cause is gained. Each
 bloodless day
 Makes our foes greater: from Dunbar
 Lord Hume,
 Who thence with hand too swift cut off
 our friends,
 Brings now six hundred to my brother's
 flag,
 Who hangs hard by us; and from Ed-
 inburgh
 Grange leads his hundreds; all the
 Glasgow folk,
 For love of Lennox, with the Lothian
 carles,
 Draw round their regent hither; and
 God knows
 These are no cowards nor men vile
 esteemed
 That stand about him: better is he
 served
 Of them than we of Herries, whose false
 wit
 Works with an open face and a close
 heart
 For other ends than live upon his
 tongue,
 And fill with protestation those loud
 lips
 That plead and swear on both sides;
 he would stand
 My counsellor, yet has not craft enough
 To draw those enemies hence that watch
 us here

By tumult raised along the border side
 For none to quell but Murray, who was
 bound
 From Glasgow where he lies yet to
 Dumfries,
 But halts to gather head, and fall on us
 When we set forth; which by my pri-
 vate will
 I would not yet, but that my kinsmen
 yearn
 To bid him battle; and with victory won
 Seize to themselves the kingdom by my
 hand,
 Which they should wield then at their
 will, and wed
 To their next heir's: so should ye have
 their seed
 For kings of Scotland, who were
 leagued ere this
 With our main foes, and to their hands
 but late
 By composition and confederacy
 Would have given up my life to buy
 their ends
 Even with the blood whose kinship in
 their veins
 They thought should make them royal.
Argyle. We must fear
 These days that fleet, and bring us no
 more strength,
 Bring to the regent comfort and good
 hope
 From England of a quiet hand main-
 tained
 Upon the borders, and such present
 peace
 As fights against us there upon his side,
 While he stands fast and gathers friends,
 who had
 But common guard about him when
 your grace
 Flew hither first, yet would not at the
 news
 For dread of our near neighborhood
 turn back
 With that thin guard to Stirling; and
 by this
 The chiefs of all his part are drawn to
 him,
 Morton and Mar, Semple with Ochil-
 tree,
 And they that wrung forth of your royal
 hand

<p>The writing that subscribed it kingdom- less: All these are armed beneath him. <i>Queen.</i> These are strong, Yet are our friends not weaker: twain alone, You twain with whom I speak, being on my side, I would not fear to bide the feud of these; And here are Cassilis, Eglinton, Mont- rose, Ross, Crawford, Errol, Fleming, Suther- land, Herries with Maxwell, Boyd and Oli- phant, And Livingstone, and Beaumont that was sent To speak for France as with mine uncle's tongue Pleading with those my traitors for that life Which here he finds enfranchised; and all these As one true heart to me and faithful hand, In God's name and their honor's leagued as friends Who till mine enemies be cast down will know Naught save their duty to me, that no strife Shall rend in sunder, and no privy jar Rive one from other that stands fast by me. This have they sworn; and, by my trust in them, I will not doubt with favor or with force To quell the hardest heart set opposite. Have I not sent forth word of amnesty To every soul in Scotland free save these, The top and crown of traitors, Morton first; And Lindsay, from whose hand I took a pledge To be redeemed with forfeit of his head; Simple, that writ lewd ballads of my love, And that good provost whom I swore to give, For one night's prison given me in his house,</p>	<p>A surer gaol for narrower resting-place Than that wherein I rested not; and last Balfour, that gave my lord's trust up and mine? Upon these five heads fallen will I set foot When I tread back the stair that mounts my throne. All others shall find grace: yea, though their hearts Were set more stark against me and their hands More dangerous aimed than these; for this God knows My heart more honours and shall ever love A hardy foe more than a coward friend; And Hume and Grange, mine enemies, well approved, Could love or recompense reknit their faiths To my forsworn allegiance, in mine eyes Should stand more clear than un- revolted men Whose trustless' faith is farther from my trust Than from my veins the nearness of their blood. I am not bitter-hearted, nor take pride To keep the record of wrongs done to me For privy hate to gnaw upon, and fret Till all its wrath be wroken; I desire Not blood so much of them that seek mine own As victory on them, who being but subdued For me may live or die my subjects: this I care not if I win with liberal words Or weapons of my friends, for love or fear, Or by their own dissensions that may spring And blossom to my profit; and I hold Nor fear nor grief grievous nor terri- ble That might buy victory to me, for whose sake Peril and pain seem pleasant, and all else</p>
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That men thirst after as I thirst for
this—

Wealth, honour, pleasure, all things
weighed therewith—

Seem to my soul contemptible and vile.
Nor would I reign that I might take

revenge,
But rather be revenged that I might
reign.

For to live conquered and put on defeat,
To sit with humbled head and bear
base life,

Endure the hours to mock me, and the
days

To take and give me as a bondslave up
For night by night to tread on—while
death lives,

And may be found, or man lay hold on
him,

I will not have this to my life, but die.
I know not what is life that outlives

hope,
But I will never: when my power were
past,

My kingdom gone, my trust brought
down, my will

Frustrate, I would not live one heart-
less hour

To think what death were gentlest;
none so sharp

But should be softer to my bosom
found

Than that which felt it strike.

Huntley. You speak as ever

Your own high soul and speech; no
spirit on earth

Was ever seen more kinglike than lifts
up

With yours our hearts to serve you for
its sake

As these have served that here would
speak with you.

Enter BEATON and MARY BEATON.

To whom our loves yield place.

[Exit ARGYLE and HUNTLEY.]

Queen. My chance were ill

If to no better love your loves gave
way

Than that which makes us friends.—
You are come betimes,

If you come ready now to ride; here lie
The letters you must bear: the card-
nal's this,

Mine uncle's of Lorraine, to whose
kind hand

Did I commend the first news of my
flight

Sent from Lord Seyton's while our
horses breathed;

By this shall he receive my mind writ
large,

And turn his own to help me. Look
you say

Even as I write, you left me in such
mind

As he would know me,—for all past
faults done

Bent but to seek of God and of the
world

Pardon; as knowing that none but only
God

Has brought me out of bonds, and inly
fixed

In perfect purpose for his mercy shown
To show a thankful and a constant
heart,

As simple woman or as queen of Scots,
In life and death fast cleaving to his
Church,

As I would have him that shall read
believe

My life to come shall only from his lips
Take shape and likeness, by their breath

alone
Still swayed and steered; to whom you
know I look

For reconciling words that may subdue
To natural pity of my laboring cause

The queen that was my mother, and
her son

My brother king that in my husband's
seat

Sits lineal in succession. Say too this,
That without help I may not hold mine

own;

And therefore shall he stand the more
my friend,

And do the kindlier, the more haste he
makes

With all good speed to raise and to
despatch

A levy of a thousand arquebusmen
To fill the want up of my ranks, that

yet
Look leaner than mine enemies'. This
for France.

<p>And this to the English queen deliver- ing say, I look, being free now, for that help of hers That in my last years' bonds not once or twice I had by word of promise, and not doubt This year to have indeed; which if I may, When from her hand I take my crown again, I shall thenceforth look for no other friend, And try no further faith. This private word In London to the ambassador of Spain Fail not to bear, that being set round with spies I may not write; but he shall tell his king The charges that men cast on me are false, And theirs the guilt that held me in their bonds Who stand in spirit firm to one faith with him From whom I look for counsel. I well think My sister's love shall but desire to hold A mean betwixt our parties, and pro- nounce On each side judgment, as by right and might 'Twixt mine and me the imperial medi- atress, Commanding peace, controlling war, that must Determine this dark time, and make alone An end of doubt and danger; which perchance May come before her answer. Haste, and thrive.</p>	<p>Might make and unmake? This were now my day To try the soothsaying of men's second sight Who read beyond the writing of the hour, And utter things unborn: now would I know, And yet I would not, how my life shall move And toward what end forever; which to know Should help me not to suffer, nor undo One jot that must be done or borne of me, Nor take one grain away. I would not know it; For one thing haply might that knowl- edge do, Or one thing undo,—to bring down the heart Wherewith I now expect it. We shall know, When we shall suffer, what God's hour will bring; If filled with wrath full from his heavy hand, Or gently laid upon us. I do think, If he were wroth with aught once done of me, That anger should be now fulfilled, and this His hour of comfort; for he should not stand, For his wrath's sake with me, mine enemies' friend, Who are more than mine his enemies. Never yet Did I desire to know of God or man What was designed me of them; nor will now For fear desire the knowledge. What I may, That will I foil of all men's enmities, And what I may of hope and good success Take, and praise God. Yet thus much would I know, If in your sight, who have seen my whole life run One stream with yours since either had its spring,</p>
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[Exit BEATON.

Now, what say you? shall fortune stand
our friend
But long enough to seem worth hope
or fear,
Or fall too soon from us for hope to
help
r fear to hurt more than an hour of
chance

My chance to come look foul or fair
again

By this day's light and likelihood.

Mary Beaton. In sooth,
No soothsayer am I; yet so far a seer,
That I can see but this of you and me,
We shall not part alive.

Queen. Dost thou mean well?

Thou hast been constant ever at my
hand

And closest when the worst part of my
fate

Came closest to me; firm as faith or
love

Hast thou stood by my peril and my
pain,

And still, where I found these, there
found I thee;

And where I found thee, these were
not far off.

When I was proud and blithe (men
said) of heart,

And life looked smooth and loving in
mine eyes,

Thou wouldst be sad and cold as au-
tumn winds,

Thy face discomfortable, and strange
thy speech,

Thy service joyless; but when times
grew hard,

And there was wind and fire in the
clear heaven,

Then wast thou near; thy service and
thy speech

Were glad and ready; in thine eyes thy
soul

Seemed to sit fixed at watch as one
that waits

And knows, and is content with what
shall be.

Nor can I tell now if thy sight should
put

More faith in me, or fear, to trust or
doubt

The chance forefigured in thee; for
thou art

As 'twere my fortune, faithful as man's
fate,

Inevitable. I cannot read the roll

That I might deem were hidden in thy
hand,

Writ with my days to be, nor from
thine eyes

Take light to know; for fortune is too
blind

As man that knows not of her; and
thyself,

That art as 'twere a type to me and
sign

Incognizable, art no more wise than I
To say what I should hope and fear to
learn,

Or why, from thee.

Mary Beaton. This one thing I know
well,

That hope nor fear need think to feed
upon,

That I should part from you alive, or
you

Take from me living mine assurance yet
To look upon you while you live, and
trace

To the grave's edge your printed feet
with mine.

Queen. Wilt thou die too?

Mary Beaton. Should I so far, so
long,

Follow my queen's face, to forsake at
last,

And lose my name for constancy? or
you,

Whose eyes alive have slain so many
men,

Want, when death shuts them, one to
die of you

Dying, who had so many loving lives
To go before you living?

Queen. Thou dost laugh

Always, to speak of death; and at this
time

God wot it should beseem us best to
smile

If we must think upon him. I and thou
Have so much in us of a single heart,

That we can smile to hear of that or
see

Which sickens and makes bleed faint
hearts for fear.

And well now shall it stand us both in
stead

To make ours hard against all chance,
and walk

Between our friends and foes indiffer-
ently

As who may think to see them one day
shift

From hate to love, and love again to hate,
 As time with peaceable or warlike hand
 Shall carve and shape them; and to go
 thus forth,
 And make an end, shall neither at my
 need
 Deject me nor uplift in spirit, who pass
 Not gladly nor yet loathly to the field
 That these my present friends have in
 my name
 Set for the trial of my death or life.
 Thou knowest long since God gave me
 cause to say
 I saw the world was not that joyous
 thing
 Which men would make it, nor the hap-
 piest they
 That lived the longest in it: so I thought
 That year the mightiest of my kinsmen
 fell,
 Slain by strong treason; and these five
 years gone
 Have lightened not so much my life to
 me,
 That I should love it more, or more
 should loathe
 That end which love or loathing, faith
 or fear,
 Can put not back nor forward by a day.
 [Exeunt.]

SCENE IX. — LANGSIDE.

MURRAY, MORTON, HUME, LINDSAY,
 OCHILTREE, SIR WILLIAM DOUG-
 LAS, KIRKALDY, and their forces.

Murray. They cannot pass our place
 of vantage here,
 To choose them out a likelier. Let our
 lines
 Lie close on either side the hollow strait
 Flanked as the hill slopes by those cot-
 tage walls,
 While here the head of our main force
 stands fast
 With wings flung each way forth: that
 narrow street
 Shall take them snared and naked.
Sir W. Douglas. I beseech you,
 If you suspect no taint or part in me
 Of treason in our kin, that I may have
 The first of this day's danger

Murray. No man here,
 Of all whose hearts are armed for Scot-
 land, hath
 First place in this day's peril, no man
 last;
 But all one part of peril, and one
 place
 To stand and strike, if God be good to
 us,
 In the last field that shall be fought for
 her
 Upon this quarrel. Who are they that
 lead
 The main of the queen's battle?
Kirkaldy. On their left
 Lord Herries, and Argyle in front;
 with him
 Claude Hamilton and James of Evan-
 dale
 Bring up their turbulent ranks.
Lindsay. Why, these keep none
 That crowd against us; horse and min-
 gled foot
 Confound each other hurtling as they
 come
 Sheer up between the houses.
Murray. Some default
 That maims the general strength has in
 their need
 Held them an hour delaying; our
 arquebusmen,
 Two thousand tried, the best half of our
 foot,
 Keep the way fast each side even to
 this height
 Where stands our strength in the open.
 We shall have,
 If aught win through of all their chiv-
 alry,
 Some sharp half-hour of hand-to-hand
 at last
 Ere one thrust other from this brow. —
 Lord Hume,
 Keep you the rear of our right wing that
 looks
 Toward Herries and his horsemen;
 Ochiltree,
 Stand you beside him; Grange and
 Lindsay here
 Shall bide with me the main front of
 their fight
 When these break through our guard.
 Let word be given

That no man when the day is won shall dare
Upon our side to spill one drop of blood
That may be spared of them that yield
or fly. [Exeunt.]

SCENE X. — ANOTHER PART OF THE
FIELD.

Enter HERRIES and SEYTON, with their soldiers.

Herries. If they of our part hold the hill-top yet,
For all our leader's loss we have the day.

Seyton. They stand this half-hour locked on both sides fast,
And grappling to the teeth. I would to God

When for faint heart and very fear
Argyle

Fell from his horse before the battle met,

The devil had writhed his neck round;
whose delay

At point to charge first maimed us; else
by this

We had scattered them as crows.
Make up again,

And drive their broken lines in on the rear

While those in front stand doubtful.
Charge once more,

Enter OCHILTREE and HUME, with soldiers.

And all this side is ours. — Lord Ochil-
tree,

Yield, in the queen's name.
Ochiltree. In the king's I stand
To bid his traitors battle.

[*They fight*; OCHILTREE falls.]

Herries. Stand thou too,
Or give us place: I had rather have
to-day

At my sword's end thee than a meaner
man

To try this cause.
Hume. This edge of mine shall try
Which side and steel be truer.

[*They fight*; HUME is wounded.]

Seyton. God and the queen!
Set on; this height once ours, this day
is too,

And all days after

Herries. Halt not yet, good friends,
Till with our bright swords we have
crowned the hill

Whereon they stand at grapple. Close
again,

And we ride lords at large of the free
field

Whence these fall hurled in sunder.
Seyton. To the height!

Our fellows are fast locked yet with our
foes:

Make up there to their comfort.
Enter LINDSAY, KIRKALDY, SIR WIL-

LIAM DOUGLAS, young OCHILTREE, with soldiers.

Lindsay. Sirs, not yet:
Ere ye win through, there be more
spears to break

Than there in fight are fastened. Stand,
or yield.

Herries. The Highland folk that
doubtfully held off

Are fallen upon our flank: hear you the
noise?

Back, sirs, bear back: we are sped.
[*Exit with his followers.*]

Seyton. The day is gone:
Let life go after; for I will not fly

To meet my queen's face as a beaten
man.

Enter MURRAY, MORTON, etc., with soldiers.

Murray. Charge once, and then
sheathe swords; the field is
ours:

They fly now both ways broken. Some
one spur

To bid those knaves that howl upon the
rear

Cut short their quest of blood. They
were too slack

Who are now so hot, when first the
hunt was up:

They shall not flesh those fangs on fly-
ing men

That in the fight were bloodless.
Seyton. Men, stand fast;

Let not the currish cry of Highland
hounds

Bark on your fugitive quarry: here a
man

May fall not like a stag or harried
hare,

But die more soldier-like than in the
toils

With their loud pack upon him.

Young Ochiltree. Die then here,
And pay me for my father, if God
please

My life with his shall lie not on thy
hand,

But thine on mine as forfeit.

[*They fight; SEYTON falls.*]

Murray. Slay him not:

I say, put up your sword.

Young Ochiltree. Sir, pardon me.

There bleeds my father yet: he too
shall die.

Murray. Young man, nor he nor any
of his part

When I say, Live. Take up your sword
again;

And by this hand that struck it from
your own

Be ruled, and learn what loyal use it
hath,

Which is not on its prisoner. Send
forth word

That none take life of any man that
yields.

Pursue, but slay not; for the day is won,
And this last battle ended that shall see
By Scottish hands the reek of Scots-
men slain

Defame the face of Scotland. While
I live,

If God as on this day be good to her,
Her eyes shall look on her own blood
no more. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XI.—THE HEIGHTS NEAR
LANGSIDE.

*The QUEEN, MARY BEATON, FLEMING,
BOYD, and young MAXWELL.*

Queen. This is the last time I shall
look on war:

Upon this day I know my fate is set
As on a sword's point. Does the fight
stand still,

That we see nothing on that hill's brow
stir

Where both sides lashed together?

Fleming. If the light

Tell mine eyes truth that reel with
watching, both

Stand with spears crossed and locked
so hard, and points

So fast inwound with such inveteracy,
That steel can thrust not steel an inch
away,

Nor foot push foot a hair's-breadth
back that hangs

On the hill's edge, and yields not.
Hark! the noise

Grows sharper and more various in its
cry

Than first it was: there comes upon the
day

Some change for good or ill; but for
my charge,

I would not say, *Would God my hand
were there!*

But take its chance upon it.

Queen. Be content

To stand this day our soldier at her side
Who will not live to lay such charge

again
On them that love her. Lo there! on

the left
They charge again from our part.

Maxwell. There it is

My father fights: his horse are they
that make

The hill's length rock and lighten as a
sea.

Look where the waves meet as that
wind of steeds

Sweeps them together; how they reel
and fall

There with the shock from under of
the storm

That takes in rear and breaks their
guard, and leaves

The right wing of the rebels cloven in
twain,

And in the cleft their first men fallen
that stood

Against the sea-breach. Oh! this gal-
lant day

Shows us our fortune fair as her fair
face

For whom we came to seek it, and the
crown

That it gives back more glorious.

Queen. If we knew

How fares our van— Nay, go not
from me one,

Lest we be scattered.

Boyd. Hear you not a cry

As from the rear, a note of ruin, sent

Higher than the noise of horsemen ;
and therewith

A roar of fire as though the artillery
there

Spake all at once its heart untimely out ?
Pray God our powder be not spent by
chance,

And in its waste undo us !

Queen. My heart is sick,
Yet shall it not subdue me while my
will

Hath still a man's strength left. I was
not thus —

I will not think what ever I have been.
The worst day lasts no longer than a
day,

And its worst hour hath but an hour of
life

Wherein to work us evil.

Mary Beaton. Here comes one
Hot-spurred with haste, and pale with
this hour's news :

Now shall we know what work it had
to do,

And what the next hour may.

Enter GEORGE DOUGLAS.

George Douglas. The day is lost.
There is but one way with us ; here we
stand

As in death's hand already. You must
fly,

Madam, while time be left or room for
flight,

As if there be I know not.

Fleming. Is the van
Broken ?

George Douglas. Look up where late
it stood so fast

That well-nigh for an hour the grappling
ranks

Were so enlinked in front, the men be-
hind

That fired across the rank of them be-
fore,

And hurled their pistols in their ene-
mies' face

Above their comrades' heads that held
the van

Saw them yet reeking on the spear-
shafts lodged

That caught them flatlong fallen athwart
the staves

Fixed opposite and level, till a shot

Slew him that led behind the artillery
up

As the first round was ended on our
part,

And straight a gunner's linstock
dropped, and gave

Fire to the powder-wagon.

Maxwell. But the horse —

We saw my father's with Lord Seyton's
horse

Hurl up against the left side round the
hill,

And break their right wing in the rear.

George Douglas. Ye saw ?

But not who brought them rescue, and
bore back

Your father's force with might and ruin :
Grange

And Lindsay, with my brother third,
who fights

With the more bitter heart and hate to-
day

For our name's sake to purge him of
my deed,

And wreak him on my friends ; and
would to God,

But for the service' sake I had to do,
He had met me whom perchance he

sought, and slain,
Ere I had borne this news out of the
fight

To bid you fly !

Queen. Where will God set mine end ?
I am wearied of this flying from death

to death

That is my life, and man's : where'er I
go,

From God and death I fly not ; and
even here

It may be they must find me.

Mary Beaton. Nay, not yet :

Take heart again, and fly.

Queen. Oh ! this I knew, —

Even by thine eyes I knew it a great
while since

As now by mine. Our end of fear is
come,

That casts out hope as well. Let us
make hence.

Perchance our help is in Dumbarton
yet,

Upon the rock where I would fain at
first

Have set my feet. — How say you, Fleming, now?

May we there make us fast?

George Douglas. The ways are thronged

With arms and noise of enemies; everywhere

The land is full of death and deadly cries

From throats that gape for blood; the regent's horse

Hold all the highway; and the straiter lanes

Stand thick with peasant folk whose hands are armed

With staves and sickles in their rage caught up

To strike at you for fault of sword or pike

Wherewith to charge us flying: no way is left

But south to Galloway and Lord Herries' land,

Where you may breathe but for a doubtful day

In the sea's sight of refuge.

Maxwell. In God's name,

Take his good counsel, madam; as you know

The noble Douglas wise and true, believe

So shall you find my father's men and mine

In this great need.

Queen. Come, help me then to horse;

If I must ride some hundred miles to breathe,

As we must fly no less, I think, or fall

Among our foes that follow, in my mind

The worst it were not, nor the unkindest death,

To die in saddle. I will not give again,

So please it God, into mine enemies' hands

My body up for bondage. Twice or thrice

I have ridden hard by stars of March or May,

With false or true men to my left and right,

The wild night through, for death or kingly life;

And if I ride now with few friends at hand,

I have none false of them; or if as once

One ride with me that had my hate alive,

Who rode with me to his own grave, and now

Holds me in chase toward mine, — O thou that wast

My hate and husband, whom these men to-day

Take on them to revenge, and in thy name

Turn all men's hearts against me that were born

Mine, and all swords that served me! if thou be

A shadow at hand, a ghost unreconciled,

That waits to take his triumph, hear and see

If in this hour that smites me, which is thine,

Thou find one thought in me that bows my heart,

One pang that turns it from the thing it was,

One pulse that moves me to repent or fear

For what was done or shall be; if thou have

But so much power upon me to be called

Less hateful or more fearful, and thy death

With aught of dread have clothed the thought of thee

That thy life had not; if thou seest me fly,

Then must thou see too that thou shalt not see,

In death or life, one part of spirit or sense

In me that calls thee master. To God's hand

I give the rest; but in mine own I hold

The perfect power for good or evil days

To keep the heart I had, and on myself

Lose not one jot of lordship: so may God

Love me no less, and be no slower, I think,
 To help my soul than theirs more vile than mine
 And made for chance to mar, whereon their fate
 Has power as on their bodies. If he will,
 Now should he help, or never; for we leave
 A field more fatal to us, and day more foul,
 Than ever cast out hope. I am loath to go
 More than to die; yet, come what will soe'er,
 I shall no more. — Thou told'st me not of this,

[To MARY BEATON.

But yet I learnt it of thee. Come, we have
 One dark day less of doom to see and live,
 Who have seen this, and die not. Stay by me:
 I know thou wilt; if I should bid thee go,
 It were but even as if I bade thee stay
 Who hast as far to flee from death as I.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE XII. — DUNDRENNAN ABBEY.

The QUEEN and HERRIES.

Queen. Talk not to me of France. this man it was
 That gave his tongue to serve my kinsmen's plea,
 Who fain had seen me plight at Hamilton
 To their Arbroath my hand and kingdom; nay,
 I will not seek my fate at Catherine's hand,
 Nor on those lips that were my mother's watch
 My life hang weighed between a word and smile,
 Nor on that sleek face of the Florentine
 Read my doom writ, nor in her smooth swart cheek

See the blood brighten with desire of mine.

I will not live or die upon her tongue
 Whose hate were glad to give me death or life

More hateful from her giving; and I know

How she made proffer to my last year's lords

To take me from their bondage to her own,

And shut my days up cloistered; even such love

Should France afford me now that in men's sight

I stand yet lower, as fallen from this year's hope

To live discredited forever. Tell him this

Who rode with you behind me from the field,

And bid him bear his mistress word of me

As one that thinks not to be made the mean

For them to weave alliance with my foes,

And with the purchase of my bartered blood

Buy back their power in Scotland.

Herries. I shall say it.

Yet this man's friendship, madam, might find faith,

Who by so wild a way has followed you

To this third day that sees your flight at end,

Where you may sit some forty days secure

In trust and guard of mine.

Queen. Ay, here I might,

Were I well weary with my two nights' sleep

On this hard earth that was my naked bed

Whom it casts out of kingdom; but, my lord,

For thirty leagues and more of ridden ground,

And two days' fare of peasants' meal and milk,

I am not yet nigher but by two days to death,

<p>Nor spent in spirit for weariness or fear, Nor in my body broken, that my need Should hold me here in bonds, or on your faith Lay a new charge of danger. Here, you say, And Beaumont with you, I may bide awhile The levy of my friends whose rallying force May gather to me, or in their default Hence to Dumbarton may I pass by sea, Or forth to France with safer sails, and prove What faith is there in friendship. Now my mind Is nowise here to tarry: your true love Shall not for guerdon of its trust and care Be tried again with peril, that as well May be put by for your faith's sake and mine So mutually made much of; nor shall they, Whose wounds run red yet from their regent's hand That on this border laid so sore a scourge As late their blood bore witness, for my sake Or give their blood again, or lose their faith That should for me be proven, and being found true Bring them to death should we twice fail, or false Turn their safe life to shame. This shall not be; But I, content to make no trial of these, Will hold them true, and leave them unessayed To live in honor. Friends I yet should have Whose peace and life lie not in those men's hands That would make prey of mine; their faith is firm And their hearts great as mine own hope in them Who look toward me from England; all the north</p>	<p>No less desires me than I need their love, To lift our creed and cause up that lies low, But wounded not to death. I have their names Who first I think will meet me face to face, And lay their loyal hands in mine, and pledge Their noble heads for surety; lord and knight Whose fathers yielded up their lives for faith Shall fail not now to seek me cast out hence, And gird me fast with all their follow- ing round And stalwart musters of their spearmen raised To do me service of stout heart and steel For these lords' sake that call me lady; names That bear the whole might of this north- ern land Upon their blazon, and the grace and strength Of their old honor with them to that side That they shall serve on; first the two great earls, Then Dacre, Norton, Swinburne, Mark- infeld, With all their houses, all the border's flower Of ancient faith and fame; had I but these To rise up when I call, and do me right, I were not poorly friended, with no more Than this for trust to lean on. But I think To find not such friends only as their name And cause should make in danger fast to mine, To link our names in all men's eyes that read Of faith in man forever: even the queen My sister's self shall fight upon my side, Being either found my friend for whom she swore,</p>
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If I were slain, to fill this land with
 fires,
 Or, casting off my cause and me, stand
 up
 As much their enemy that partake my
 faith
 As mine who lack not friends in all her
 land
 That in this cause cast off will strike at
 her
 For God's sake on my party. But
 indeed
 I look to find not such a foe of her
 As should have heart or wit to fight
 with me,
 Though she had will who has not; for
 her mind,
 Still moving like a blown and barren
 sea,
 Has yet not ever set so far toward storm
 Or so much shifted from its natural
 tide
 As to seem safe or prosperous for their
 sails
 Who traffic for my ruin; and I fear
 No wind of change that may breathe
 sharp on me
 When once I stand in mine own name
 to speak
 Before her face and England's. If she
 will,
 By her shall I come back to reign her
 friend:
 If not by her, then by their loves and
 hands
 Who shall put off her sovereignty for
 mine.
 There is not and there needs no better
 way
 Than here lies fair before my feet, which
 yet
 Are not so tired but they may tread it
 through
 To the good end. My heart is higher
 again
 Than ere that field it was, I know not
 why,
 Which sent me hither. You shall write
 for me
 Word to the warden of Carlisle, and
 say
 Your queen seeks covert for her crown-
 less head
 With him the first in England; and
 thereon
 Ere he send answer, or to-morrow set,
 Will I pass over.
Herries. I would fain believe
 His queen were true of heart, and all
 your friends
 As strong to serve as faithful: yet may
 she
 Have better will than she has power to
 make,
 As it would be, your servant; and the
 land
 Is many-minded, rent with doubt in
 twain,
 And full of fears and factions. You
 may pass,
 Even in this hope that now builds up
 your heart,
 To find less help at no less need than
 here
 On darker ways and deadlier: yet your
 will
 Shall if it hold be done.
Queen. Despatch, and write:
 To stand before the gate of days to
 be,
 And beat their doors for entrance, is
 more pain
 Than to pass in, and look on life or
 death.
 Here will I sleep within your ward to-
 night,
 And then no more in Scotland. Nay,
 make haste:
 I would those hours were past that hold
 me here.

SCENE XIII. — THE SHORE OF SOL-
 WAY FIRTH.
The QUEEN, MARY BEATON, HERRIES,
GEORGE DOUGLAS, Page and Attendants.
Queen. Is not the tide yet full?
Herries. Come half an hour,
 And it will turn; but ere that ebb begin.
 Let me once more desire your pardon,
 though
 I plead against your pleasure. Here
 you stand
 Not yet dethroned from royal hope, not
 yet

<p>Discrowned of your great name, whose natural power Faith here forgets not, nor man's loyal love Leaves off to honor : but gone hence, your name Is but a stranger's, subject to men's laws, Alien and liable to control and chance That are the lords of exile, and com- mand The days and nights of fugitives; your hope Dies of strange breath, or lives between strange lips; And nor your will nor only God's beside Is master of your peace of life, but theirs Who, being the lords of land that har- bors you, Give your life leave to endure their empire. What Can man do to you that a rebel may, Which fear might deem as bad as ban- ishment? Not death, not bonds, are bitterer than his day On whom the sun looks forth of a strange sky, Whose thirst drinks water from strange hands, whose lips Eat strangers' bread for hunger; who lies down In a strange dark, and sleeps not, and the light Makes his eyes weep for their own morning, seen On hills that helped to make him man, and fields Whose flowers grew round his heart's root; day like night Denies him, and the stars and airs of heaven Are as their eyes and tongues who know him not. Go not to banishment: the world is great, But each has but his own land in the world. There is one bosom that gives each man milk,—</p>	<p>One country, like one mother: none sleeps well Who lies between strange breasts; no lips drink life That seek it from strange fosters. Go not hence: You shall find no man's faith or love on earth Like theirs that here cleave to you. <i>Queen.</i> I have found, And think to find, no hate of men on earth Like theirs that here beats on me Hath this earth Which sent me forth a five-years' child, and queen Not even of mine own sorrows, to come back A widowed girl out of the fair warm sun Into the grave's mouth of a dolorous land And life like death's own shadow, that began With three days' darkness,—hath this earth of yours That made mine enemies, at whose iron breast They drank the milk of treason; this hard nurse, Whose rocks and storms have reared no violent thing So monstrous as men's angers, whose wild minds Were fed from hers and fashioned; this that bears None but such sons as being my friends are weak, And strong, being most my foes,—hath it such grace As I should cling to, or such virtue found In some part of its evil as my heart Should fear, being free, to part from? Have I lived, Since I came here in shadow and storm, three days Out of the storm and shadow? Have I seen Such rest, such hope, such respite from despair, As thralls and prisoners in strong dark- ness may</p>
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Before the light look on them? Hath
 there come
 One chance on me of comfort, one poor
 change,
 One possible content that was not born
 Of hope to break forth of these bonds,
 or made
 Of trust in foreign fortune? Here, I
 knew,
 Could never faith nor love nor comfort
 breed
 While I sat fast in prison: ye, my
 friends,
 The few men and the true men that
 were mine,
 What were ye but what I was, and
 what help
 Hath each love had of other, yours of
 mine,
 Mine of your faith, but change of fight
 and flight,
 Fear and vain hope and ruin? Let me
 go,
 Who have been but grief and danger to
 my friends:
 It may be I shall come with power
 again
 To give back all their losses, and build
 up
 What for my sake was broken.
Herries. Did I know it,
 Yet were I loath to bid you part, and
 find
 What there you go to seek; but know-
 ing it not,
 My heart sinks in me, and my spirit is
 sick,
 To think how this fair foot once parted
 hence
 May rest thus light on Scottish ground
 no more.
Queen. It shall tread heavier when it
 steps again
 On earth which now rejects it; I shall
 live
 To bruise their heads who wounded me
 at heel,
 When I shall set it on their necks.
 Come, friends,
 I think the fisher's boat hath hoised up
 sail
 That is to bear none but one friend and
 me:

Here must my true men and their
 queen take leave,
 And each keep thought of other. — My
 fair page,
 Before the man's change darken on
 your chin,
 I may come back to ride with you at
 rein
 To a more fortunate field. howe'er
 that be,
 Ride you right on with better hap, and
 live
 As true to one of merrier days than
 mine
 As on that night to Mary once your
 queen.
Douglas, I have not won a word of
 you:
 What would you do to have me tarry?
George Douglas. Die.
Queen. I lack not love, it seems, then,
 at my last.
 That word was bitter; yet I blame it
 not,
 Who would not have sweet words upon
 my lips
 Nor in mine ears at parting. I should
 go,
 And stand not here as on a stage to
 play
 My last part out in Scotland: I have
 been
 Too long a queen too little. By my
 life,
 I know not what should hold me here,
 or turn
 My foot back from the boat-side, save
 the thought
 How at Lochleven I last set foot
 aboard,
 And with what hope, and to what end;
 and now
 I pass not out of prison to my friends,
 But out of all friends' help to banish-
 ment. —
Farewell, Lord Herries.
Herries. God go with my queen,
 And bring her back with better friends
 than I!
Queen. Methinks the sand yet cleav-
 ing to my foot
 Should not with no more words be
 shaken off,

<p>Nor this my country from my parting eyes Pass unsaluted; for who knows what year May see us greet hereafter? Yet take heed, Ye that have ears, and hear me; and take note, Ye that have eyes, and see with what last looks Mine own take leave of Scotland. Seven years since Did I take leave of my fair land of France, My joyous mother, mother of my joy, Weeping; and now with many a woe between, And space of seven years' darkness, I depart From this distempered and unnatural earth That casts me out unmothered, and go forth On this gray, sterile, bitter, gleaming sea With neither tears nor laughter, but a heart That from the softest temper of its blood Is turned to fire and iron. If I live, If God pluck not all hope out of my hand, If aught of all mine prosper, I that go Shall come back to men's ruin, as a flame The wind bears down, that grows against the wind, And grasps it with great hands, and wins its way, And wins its will, and triumphs; so shall I Let loose the fire of all my heart to feed On these that would have quenched it. I will make From sea to sea one furnace of the land, Whereon the wind of war shall beat its wings</p>	<p>Till they wax faint with hopeless hope of rest, And with one rain of men's rebellious blood Extinguish the red embers. I will leave No living soul of their blaspheming faith Who war with monarchs: God shall see me reign As he shall reign beside me, and his foes Lie at my foot with mine; kingdoms and kings Shall from my heart take spirit, and at my soul Their souls be kindled to devour for prey The people that would make its prey of them, And leave God's altar stripped of sac- rament As all kings' heads of sovereignty, and make Bare as their thrones his temples; I will set Those old things of his holiness or high That are brought low, and break be- neath my feet These new things of men's fashion; I will sit And see tears flow from eyes that saw me weep, And dust and ashes and the shadow of death Cast from the block beneath the axe that falls On heads that saw me humbled; I will do it, Or bow mine own down to no royal end, And give my blood for theirs if God's will be, But come back never as I now go forth With but the hate of men to track my way, And not the face of any friend alive. <i>Mary Beaton.</i> But I will never leave you till you die.</p>
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MARY STUART: A TRAGEDY.

ἀντὶ μὲν ἑχθρῶν γλύσσει ἑχθρῶν
γλύσσει τελευτῶν τῶν ἀφελόμενον
πρῶτον αὐτῶν ἀπὸ αὐτῶν.

ἀντὶ δὲ πλεῖστὴ φωνὴ φωνῶν
ἐλλήνων τῶν αὐτῶν ἀρᾶσιν παθεῖν,
τρεῖς μὲν αὖτις τῶν φωνῶν.

ÆSCH. Cho. 309-315.

I DEDICATE THIS PLAY, NO LONGER, AS THE FIRST PART OF THE TRILogy WHICH IT COMPLETES WAS DEDICATED, TO THE GREATEST EXILE, BUT SIMPLY TO THE GREATEST MAN OF FRANCE; TO THE CHIEF OF LIVING POETS; TO THE FIRST DRAMATIST OF HIS AGE; TO MY BELOVED AND REVERED MASTER, VICTOR HUGO.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MARY STUART.
MARY BEATON.
QUEEN ELIZABETH.
BARRARA MOWBRAY.
LORD BURGHELY.
SIR FRANCIS WALSHINGHAM.
WILLIAM DAVISON.
ROBERT DUDLEY, *Earl of Leicester*.
GEORGE TALBOT, *Earl of Shrewsbury*.
EARL OF KENT.
HENRY CAREY, *Lord Hunsdon*.
SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON.
SIR THOMAS BROMLEY, *Lord Chancellor*.
POPHAM, *Attorney-General*.
EGERTON, *Solicitor-General*.
GAWDY, *the Queen's Sergeant*.
SIR AMYAS PAULET.
SIR DREW DRURY.

SIR THOMAS GORION.
SIR WILLIAM WADE.
SIR ANDREW MELVILLE.
ROBERT BEALE, *Clerk of the Council*.
CURLE and NAU, *Secretaries to the Queen of Scots*.
GORION, *her Apothecary*.
FATHER JOHN BALLARD,
ANTHONY BABINGTON,
CHIDDOCK TICHBORNE,
JOHN SAVAGE,
CHARLES TILNEY,
EDWARD ARINGTON,
THOMAS SALISBURY,
ROBERT BARNWELL,
THOMAS PHILLIPPS, *Secretary to Walshingham*.
M. DE CHÂTEAUNEUF.
M. DE BELLÈVRE.

Conspirators.

Commissioners, Privy Councillors, Sheriffs, Citizens, Officers, and Attendants.

TIME, FROM AUGUST 14, 1586, TO FEBRUARY 18, 1587.

ACT I.—ANTHONY BABINGTON.

SCENE I.—BARINGTON'S LODGING.
A Veiled Picture on the Wall.

Enter BABINGTON, TICHBORNE, TILNEY, ARINGTON, SALISBURY, and BARNWELL.

Babington. Welcome, good friends, and welcome this good day

That casts out hope, and brings in certainty

To turn raw spring to summer. Now not long

The flower that crowns the front of all our faiths

Shall bleach to death in prison; now the trust

That took the night with fire as of a star Grows red and broad as sunrise in our sight,

Who held it dear and desperate once,
 now sure,
 But not more dear, being surer. In my
 hand
 I hold this England and her brood, and
 all
 That time out of the chance of all her
 fate
 Makes hopeful or makes fearful: days
 and years,
 Triumphs and changes bred for praise
 or shame
 From the unborn womb of these un-
 known, are ours
 That stand yet noteless here; ours even
 as God's,
 Who puts them in our hand as his, to
 wield
 And shape to service godlike. None
 of you
 But this day strikes out of the scroll of
 death,
 And writes apart immortal: what we
 would,
 That have we; what our fathers, breth-
 ren, peers,
 Bled and beheld not, died and might
 not win,
 That may we see, touch, handle, hold it
 fast,
 May take to bind our brows with. By
 my life,
 I think none ever had such hap alive
 As ours upon whose plighted lives are
 set
 The whole good hap and evil of the
 State,
 And of the Church of God, and world of
 men,
 And fortune of all crowns and creeds
 that hang
 Now on the creed and crown of this our
 land,
 To bring forth fruit to our resolve, and
 bear
 What sons to time it please us; whose
 mere will
 Is father of the future.

Tilney. Have you said?

Babington. I cannot say too much of
 so much good.

Tilney. Say nothing, then, a little, and
 hear one while:

Your talk struts high and swaggers
 loud for joy,
 And safely may perchance, or may not,
 here;
 But why to-day we know not.

Babington. No, I swear,
 Ye know not yet, no man of us but one,
 No man on earth; one woman knows,
 and I,

I that best know her, the best begot of
 man
 And noblest: no king born so kingly
 souled,
 Nor served of such brave servants.

Tichborne. What, as we?
Babington. Is there one vein in one of
 all our hearts

That is not blown aflame as fire with
 air

With even the thought to serve her?
 And, by God,

They that would serve had need be
 bolder found

Than common kings find servants.

Salisbury. Well, your cause?
 What need or hope has this day's heat
 brought forth

To blow such fire up in you?

Babington. Hark you, sirs:
 The time is come, ere I shall speak of
 this,

To set again the seal on our past oaths,
 And bind their trothplight faster than
 it is

With one more witness; not for shame-
 ful doubt,

But love and perfect honor. Gentlemen,
 Whose souls are brethren sealed and
 sworn to mine,

Friends that have taken on your hearts
 and hands

The selfsame work and weight of deed
 as I,—

Look on this picture: from its face to-
 day

Thus I pluck off the muffled mask, and
 bare

Its likeness and our purpose. Ay, look
 here;

None of these faces but are friends of
 each,

None of these lips unsworn to all the
 rest,

<p>None of these hands unplighted. Know ye not What these have bound their souls to? And myself, I that stand midmost painted here of all, Have I not right to wear of all this ring The topmost flower of danger? Who but I Should crown and close this goodly circle up Of friends I call my followers? There ye stand, Fashioned all five in likeness of mere life, Just your own shapes, even all the man but speech, As in a speckless mirror; Tichborne, thou, My nearest heart and brother next in deed, Then Abington, there Salisbury, Tilney there, And Barnwell, with the brave bright Irish eye That burns with red remembrance of the blood Seen drenching those green fields turned brown and gray Where fire can burn not faith out, nor the sword That hews the boughs off lop the root there set To spread in spite of axes. Friends, take heed: These are not met for nothing here in show, Nor for poor pride set forth and boast- ful heart To make dumb brag of the undone deed, and wear The ghost and mockery of a crown unearned Before their hands have wrought it for their heads Out of a golden danger, glorious doubt, An act incomparable, by all time's mouths To be more blessed and cursed than all deeds done In this swift fiery world of ours, that drives</p>	<p>On such hot wheels toward evil goals or good, And desperate each as other; but that each, Seeing here himself and knowing why here, may set His whole heart's might on the instant work, and hence Pass as a man rechristened, bathed anew, And swordlike tempered from the touch that turns Dull iron to the two-edged fang of steel Made keen as fire by water. So, I say, Let this dead likeness of you, wrought with hands Whereof ye wist not, working for mine end Even as ye gave them work, unwittingly, Quicken with life your vows and pur- poses To rid the beast that troubles all the world Out of men's sight and God's. Are ye not sworn Or stand not ready girt at perilous need To strike under the cloth of state itself The very heart we hunt for? <i>Tichborne.</i> Let not then Too high a noise of hound and horn give note How hot the hunt is on it, and ere we shoot Startle the royal quarry; lest your cry Give tongue too loud on such a trail, and we More piteously be rent of our own hounds Than he that went forth huntsman too, and came To play the hart he hunted. <i>Babington.</i> Ay, but, see, Your apish poet's-likeness holds not here, If he that fed his hounds on his changed flesh Was charmed out of a man, and bayed to death, But through pure anger of a perfect maid; For she that should of huntsmen turn us harts</p>
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Is Dian but in mouths of her own
knaves,
And in paid eyes hath only godhead on,
And light to dazzle none but them to
death.
Yet I durst well abide her, and proclaim
As goddess-like as maiden.
Barnwell. Why, myself
Was late at court in presence, and her
eyes
Fixed somehow on me full in face; yet,
'faith,
I felt for that no lightning in my blood,
Nor blast in mine as of the sun at noon
To blind their balls with godhead: no,
ye see,
I walk yet well enough.
Abington. She gazed at you?
Barnwell. Yes, 'faith: yea, surely:
take a Puritan oath
To seal my faith for Catholic. What,
God help,
Are not mine eyes yet whole, then? am
I blind
Or maimed or scorched, and know not?
By my head,
I find it sit yet none the worse for fear
To be so thunder-blasted.
Abington. Hear you, sirs?
Tickborne. I was not fain to hear it.
Barnwell. Which was he
Spake of one changed into a hart? by
God,
There be some hearts here need no
charm, I think,
To turn them hares of hunters; or if
deer,
Not harts but hinds, and rascal.
Babington. Peace, man, peace!
Let not at least this noble cry of hounds
Flash fangs against each other. See
what verse
I bade write under on the picture here:
*These are my comrades, whom the peril's
self*
Draws to it. How say you? will not all
in the end
Prove fellows to me? how should one
fall off
Whom danger lures and scares not?
Tush! take hands;
It was to keep them fast in all time's
sight

I bade my painter set you here, and me
Your loving captain; gave him sight of
each
And order of us all in amity.
And if this yet not shame you, or your
hearts
Be set as boys' on wrangling, yet,
behold,
I pluck as from my heart this witness
forth [Taking out a letter.
To what a work we are bound to,—
even her hand
Whom we must bring from bondage,
and again
Be brought of her to honor. This is
she,
Mary the queen, sealed of herself and
signed
As mine assured good friend forever.
Now,
Am I more worth, or Ballard?
Tilney. He it was
Bade get her hand and seal to allow of
all
That should be practised; he is wise.
Babington. Ay, wise!
He was in peril too, he said, God wot,
And must have surety of her, he; but I,
'Tis I that have it, and her heart and
trust,
See all here else, her trust and her good
love,
Who knows mine own heart of mine
own hand writ
And sent her for assurance.
Salisbury. This we know:
What we would yet have certified of
you
Is her own heart sent back, you say, for
yours.
Babington. I say? not I, but proof
says here, cries out
Her perfect will and purpose. Look
you, first
She writes me what good comfort hath
she had
To know by letter mine estate, and thus
Reknit the bond of our intelligence,
As grief was hers to live without the
same
This great while past; then lovingly
commends
In me her own desire to avert betimes

<p>Our enemies' counsel to root out our faith With ruin of us all; for so she hath shown All Catholic princes what long since they have wrought Against the king of Spain; and all this while The Catholics naked here to all misuse Fall off in numbered force, in means and power, And if we look not to it shall soon lack strength To rise and take that hope or help by the hand Which time shall offer them; and see for this What heart is hers! she bids you know of me Though she were no part of this cause, who holds Worthless her own weighed with the general weal, — She will be still most willing to this end To employ therein her life and all she hath Or in this world may look for. <i>Tichborne.</i> This rings well; But by what present mean prepared doth hers Confirm your counsel? or what way set forth So to prevent our enemies with good speed That at the goal we find them not, and there Fall as men broken? <i>Babington.</i> Nay, what think you, man, Or what esteem of her, that hope should lack Herein her counsel? hath she not been found Most wary still, clear-spirited, bright of wit, Keen as a sword's edge, as a bird's eye swift, Man-hearted ever? First, for crown and base Of all this enterprise, she bids me here Examine with good heed of good event What power of horse and foot among us all We may well muster, and in every shire</p>	<p>Choose out what captain for them, if we lack For the main host a general, — as, in- deed, Myself being bound to bring her out of bonds, Or here with you cut off the heretic queen, Could take not this on me, — what havens, towns, What ports to north and west and south, may we Assure ourselves to hold in certain hand For entrance and receipt of help from France, From Spain, or the Low Countries; in what place Draw our main head together; for how long Raise for this threefold force of foreign friends Wage and munition, or what harbors choose For these to land; or what provision crave Of coin at need or armor; by what means The six her friends deliberate to pro- ceed; And, last, the manner how to get her forth From this last hold wherein she newly lies: These heads hath she set down, and bids me take Of all seven points counsel and com- mon care With as few friends as may be of the chief Ranged on our part for actors; and thereon Of all devised with diligent speed de- spatch Word to the ambassador of Spain in France, Who, to the experience past of all the estate Here on this side aforetime that he hath, Shall join goodwill to serve us. <i>Tilney.</i> Ay, no more? Of us no more I mean, who being most near</p>
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To the English queen our natural mis-
 tress born
 Take on our hands, her household pen-
 sioners',
 The stain and chiefest peril of her blood
 Shed by close violence under trust; no
 word,
 No care shown further of our enterprise
 That flowers to fruit for her sake?
Babington. Fear not that;
 Abide till we draw thither — ay — she
 bids
 Get first assurance of such help to come,
 And take thereafter, what before were
 vain,
 Swift order to provide arms, horses,
 coin,
 Wherewith to march at word from every
 shire
 Given by the chief; and save these
 principals
 Let no man's knowledge less in place
 partake
 The privy ground we move on, but set
 forth
 For entertainment of the meaner ear
 We do but fortify us against the plot
 Laid of the Puritan part in all this
 realm
 That have their general force now drawn
 to head
 In the Low Countries, whence being
 home returned
 They think to spoil us utterly, and usurp
 Not from her only and all else lawful
 heirs
 The kingly power, but from their queen
 that is
 (As we may let the bruit fly forth dis-
 guised)
 Wrest that which now she hath, if she
 for fear
 Take not their yoke upon her, and
 therefrom
 Catch like infection from plague-tainted
 air
 The purulence of their purity; with
 which plea
 We so may stablish our confederacies
 As wrought but for defence of lands,
 lives, goods,
 From them that would cut off our faith
 and these;

No word writ straight or given directly
 forth
 Against the queen, but rather showing
 our will
 Firm to maintain her and her lineal
 heirs,
Myself (she saith) *not named.* Hal gal-
 lant souls,
 Hath our queen's craft no savor of
 sweet wit,
 No brain to help her heart with?
Tichborne. But our end —
 No word of this yet?
Babington. And a good word here,
 And worth our note, good friend: being
 thus prepared,
 Time then shall be to set our hands on
 work,
 And straight thereon take order that
 she may
 Be suddenly transported out of guard,
 Not tarrying till our foreign force come
 in,
 Which then must make the hotter
 haste; and seeing
 We can make no day sure for our
 design,
 Nor certain hour appointed when she
 might
 Find other friends at hand on spur of
 the act
 To take her forth of prison, ye should
 have
 About you always, or in court at
 least,
 Scouts furnished well with horses of
 good speed
 To bear the tidings to her and them
 whose charge
 Shall be to bring her out of bonds, that
 these
 May be about her ere her keeper have
 word
 What deed is freshly done, — in any
 case,
 Ere he can make him strong within the
 house
 Or bear her forth of it; and need it
 were
 By divers ways to send forth two or
 three,
 That one may pass if one be stayed;
 nor this

Should we forget, to assay in the hour of need	So many a man to deathward, or sealed up
To cut the common posts off: by this plot	So many an eye from sunlight.
May we steer safe, and fall not miser- ably,	<i>Babington.</i> By my head, Which is the main stake of this cast, I swear
As they that labored heretofore here- in,	There is none worth more than a tear of hers
Through over-haste to stir upon this side	That man wears living or that man might lose.
Ere surety make us strong of strangers' aid.	Borne upright in the sun, or for her sake
And if at first we bring her forth of bonds,	Bowed down by theirs she weeps for. Nay, but hear:
Be well assured, she bids us — as I think	She bids me take most vigilant heed, that all
She doubts not me that I should let this slip,	May prosperously find end assured, and you
Forget so main a matter — well as- sured	Conclude with me in judgment; to my- self,
To set her in the heart of some strong host,	As chief of trust in my particular, Refers you for assurance, and com- mends
Or strength of some good hold, where she may stay	To counsel seasonable and time's ad- vice
Till we be mustered, and the ally drawn in.	Your common resolution; and again, If the design take yet not hold, as chance
For should the queen, being scathless of us yet	For all our will may turn it, we should not
As we unready, fall upon her flight, The bird untimely fled from snare to snare	Pursue her transport nor the plot laid else
Should find, being caught again, a nar- rower hold,	Of our so baffled enterprise; but say When this were done we might not come at her,
Whence she should fly forth never, if cause indeed	Being by mishap close guarded in the Tower
Should seem not given to use her worse; and we	Or some strength else as dangerous, yet, she saith,
Should be with all extremity pursued, To her more grief; for this should grieve her more	For God's sake leave not to proceed herein
Than what might heaviest fall upon her.	To the utmost undertaking; for her- self
<i>Tilney. Ay?</i>	At any time shall most contentedly Die, knowing of our deliverance from the bonds
She hath had, then, work enough to do to weep	Wherein as slaves we are holden.
For them that bled before: Northum- berland,	<i>Barnwell.</i> So shall I, Knowing at the least of her enfran- chisement
The choice of all the north, spoiled, banished, slain;	Whose life were worth the whole blood shed o' the world
Norfolk, that should have ringed the fourth sad time	And all men's hearts made empty.
The fairest hand wherewith fate ever led	

Babington. Ay, good friend,
 Here speaks she of your fellows, that
 some stir
 Might be in Ireland labored to begin
 Some time ere we take aught on us,
 that thence
 The alarm might spring right on the
 part opposed
 To where should grow the danger: she
 meantime
 Should while the work were even in
 hand assay
 To make the Catholics in her Scotland
 rise,
 And put her son into their hands, that
 so
 No help may serve our enemies thence;
 again,
 That from our plots the stroke may
 come, she thinks
 To have some chief or general head of
 all
 Were now most apt for the instant end;
 wherein
 I branch not off from her in counsel,
 yet
 Conceive not how to send the ap-
 pointed word
 To the earl of Arundel now fast in
 bonds
 Held in the Tower she spake of late,
 who now
 Would have us give him careful note
 of this,
 Him or his brethren; and from oversea
 Would have us seek, if he be there at
 large,
 To the young son of dead Northum-
 berland,
 And Westmoreland, whose hand and
 name, we know,
 May do much northward; ay, but this
 we know,
 How much his hand was lesser than his
 name
 When proof was put on either; and the
 lord
 Paget, whose power is in some shires
 of weight
 To incline them us-ward; both may
 now be had,
 And some, she saith, of the exiles prin-
 cipal,

If the enterprise be resolute once, with
 these
 May come back darkling; Paget lies in
 Spain,
 Whom we may treat with by his broth-
 er's mean,
 Charles, who keeps watch in Paris.
 Then in the end
 She bids beware no messenger sent forth
 That bears our counsel bear our letters:
 these
 Must through blind hands precede
 them, or ensue
 By ignorant posts, and severally de-
 spatched;
 And of her sweet wise heart, as we
 were fools,—
 But that I think she fears not,—bids
 take heed
 Of spies among us and false brethren,
 chief
 Of priests already practised on, she
 saith,
 By the enemy's craft against us. What!
 forsooth,
 We have not eyes to set such knaves
 apart,
 And look their wiles through, but
 should need misdoubt
 — Whom shall I say the least on all
 our side? —
 Good Gilbert Gifford with his kind
 boy's face
 That fear's lean self could fear not?
 But God knows
 Woman is wise, but woman: none so
 bold,
 So cunning none, God help the soft
 sweet wit,
 But the fair flesh with weakness taints
 it: why,
 She warns me here of perilous scrolls
 to keep
 That I should never bear about me,
 seeing
 By that fault sank all they that fell
 before
 Who should have walked unwounded
 else of proof,
 Unstayed of justice. But this following
 word
 Hath savor of more judgment: we
 should let

As little as we may our names be known,
 Or purpose here, to the envoy sent from France,
 Whom though she hears for honest, we must fear
 His master holds the course of his design
 Far contrary to this of ours, which known
 Might move him to discovery.
Tichborne. Well forewarned :
 Fore-armed enough were now that cause at need
 Which had but half so good an armor on
 To fight false faith or France in *Babington.* Peace a while ;
 Here she winds up her craft. She hath long time sued
 To shift her lodging, and for answer hath
 None but the castle of Dudley named as meet
 To serve this turn ; and thither may depart,
 She thinks, with parting summer ; whence may we
 Devise what means about those lands to lay
 For her deliverance ; who from present bonds
 May but by one of three ways be discharged :
 When she shall ride forth on the moors that part
 Her prison-place from Stafford, where few folk
 Use to pass over, on the same day set,
 With fifty or threescore men, well horsed and armed,
 To take her from her keeper's charge, who rides
 With but some score that bear but pistols ; next,
 To come by deep night round the darkling house,
 And fire the barns and stables, which being nigh
 Shall draw the household huddling forth to help,
 And they that come to serve her, wearing each

A secret sign for note and cognizance,
 May some of them surprise the house, whom she
 Shall with her servants meet and second ; last,
 When carts come in at morning, these being met
 In the main gateway's midst may by device
 Fall or be sidelong overthrown, and we
 Make in thereon, and suddenly possess
 The house, whence lightly might we bear her forth
 Ere help came in of soldiers to relief
 Who lie a mile or half a mile away
 In several lodgings. But, howe'er this end,
 She holds her bounden to me all her days,
 Who proffer me to hazard for her love,
 And doubtless shall as well esteem of you,
 Or scarce less honorably, when she shall know
 Your names who serve beneath me ; so commends
 Her friend to God, and bids me burn the word
 That I would wear at heart forever : yet,
 Lest this sweet scripture haply write us dead,
 Where she set hand I set my lips, and thus
 Rend mine own heart with her sweet name, and end.

[Tears the letter.
Salisbury. She hath chosen a trusty servant.
Babington. Ay, of me ?
 What ails you at her choice ? was this not I
 That laid the ground of all this work, and wrought
 Your hearts to shape for service ? or perchance
 The man was you that took this first on him,
 To serve her dying and living, and put on
 The blood-red name of traitor and the deed
 Found for her sake not murderous ?

Salisbury. Why, they say
 First Gifford put this on you, Ballard
 next,
 Whom he brought over to redeem your
 heart
 Half lost for doubt already, and refresh
 The flagging flame that fired it first, and
 now
 Fell faltering half in ashes, whence his
 breath
 Hardly with hard pains quickened it,
 and blew
 The gray to red rekindling.
Babington. Sir, they lie
 Who say for fear I faltered, or lost
 heart
 For doubt to lose life after: let such
 know
 It shames me not, though I were slow
 of will,
 To take such work upon my soul and
 hand
 As killing of a queen; being once
 assured,
 Brought once past question, set beyond
 men's doubts
 By witness of God's will borne sensibly,
 Meseems I have swerved not.
Salisbury. Ay, when once the word
 Was washed in holy water, you would
 wear
 Lightly the name so hallowed of
 priests' lips
 That men spell murderer; but till Bal-
 lard spake,
 The shadow of her slaying whom we
 shall strike
 Was ice to freeze your purpose.
Tichborne. Friend, what then?
 Is this so small a thing, being English
 born,
 To strike the living empire here at
 heart
 That is called England? stab her pres-
 ent state,
 Give even her false-faced likeness up
 to death,
 With hands that smite a woman? I
 that speak,
 Ye know me if now my faith be firm,
 and will
 To do faith's bidding; yet it wrings
 not me

To say I was not quick nor light of
 heart,
 Though moved perforce of will un-
 willingly,
 To take in trust this charge upon me.
Barnwell. I
 With all good will would take, and give
 God thanks,
 The charge of all that falter in it: by
 heaven,
 To hear in the end of doubts and
 doublings heaves
 My heart up as with sickness. Why,
 by this
 The heretic harlot that confounds our
 hope
 Should be made carrion, with those
 following four
 That were to wait upon her dead: all
 five
 Live yet to scourge God's servants, and
 we prate
 And threaten here in painting. By my
 life,
 I see no more in us of life or heart
 Than in this heartless picture.
Babington. Peace, again.
 Our purpose shall not long lack life,
 nor they
 Whose life is deadly to the heart of
 ours
 Much longer keep it: Burghley, Wal-
 singham,
 Hunsdon and Knowles, all these four
 names writ out,
 With hers at head they worship, are
 but now
 As those five several letters that spell
 death,
 In eyes that read them right. Give me
 but faith
 A little longer: trust that heart a
 while
 Which laid the ground of all our glo-
 ries; think
 I that was chosen of our queen's friends
 in France,
 By Morgan's hand there prisoner for
 her sake
 On charge of such a deed's device as
 ours
 Commended to her for trustiest, and a
 man

<p>More sure than might be Ballard and more fit To bear the burden of her counsels, — I Can be not undeserving, whom she trusts, That ye should likewise trust me; seeing at first She writes me but a thankful word, and this, God wot, for little service; I return, For aptest answer and thankworthiest meed, 'Word of the usurper's plotted end, and she 'With such large heart of trust and liberal faith As here ye have heard requites me: whom, I think, For you to trust is no too great thing now For me to ask and have of all. <i>Titchborne.</i> Dear friend, Mistrust has no part in our mind of you More than in hers; yet she too bids take heed, As I would bid you take, and let not slip The least of her good counsels, which to keep No whit proclaims us colder than her- self Who gives us charge to keep them, and to slight No whit proclaims us less unserviceable Who are found too hot to serve her, than the slave Who for cold heart and fear might fail. <i>Babington.</i> Too hot! Why, what man's heart hath heat enough or blood To give for such good service? Look you, sirs, This is no new thing for my faith to keep, My soul to feed its fires with, and my hope Fix eyes upon star to steer by: she That six years hence the boy that I was then, And page, ye know, to Shrewsbury, gave his faith To serve and worship with his body and soul</p>	<p>For only lady and queen, with power alone To lift my heart up and bow down mine eyes At sight and sense of her sweet sove- reignty, Made thence her man forever; she whose look Turned all my blood of life to tears and fire, That going or coming, sad or glad (for yet She would be somewhat merry, as though to give Comfort, and ease at heart her servants, then Weep smilingly to be so light of mind, Saying she was like the bird grown blithe in bonds, That if too late set free would die for fear, Or wild birds hunt it out of life; if sad, Put madness in me for her suffering's sake, If joyous, for her very love's sake) still Made my heart mad alike to serve her, being I know not when the sweeter, sad or blithe, Nor what mood' heavenliest of her, all whose change Was as of stars and sun and moon in heaven, — She is well content — ye have heard her — she, to die, If we without her may redeem our- selves, And loose our lives from bondage; but her friends Must take, forsooth, good heed they be not, no, Too hot of heart to serve her! And for me, Am I so vain a thing of wind and smoke That your deep counsel must have care to keep My lightness safe in wardship? I sought none, — Craved no man's counsel to draw plain my plot, Need no man's warning to dispose my deed.</p>
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<p>Have I not laid of mine own hand a snare To bring no less a lusty bird to lure Than Walsingham with proffer of my- self For scout and spy on mine own friends in France To fill his wise wide ears with large report Of all things wrought there on our side, and plots Laid for our queen's sake? and for all his wit This politic knave misdoubts me not, whom ye Hold yet too light and lean of wit to pass Unspied of wise men on our enemies' part, Who have sealed the subtlest eyes up of them all.</p> <p><i>Tichborne.</i> That would I know; for if they be not blind, But only wink upon your proffer, seeing More than they let your own eyes find or fear, Why, there may lurk a fire to burn us all Masked in them with false blindness.</p> <p><i>Babington.</i> Hear you, sirs? Now, by the faith I had in this my friend, And by mine own yet flawless toward him, yea By all true love and trust that holds men fast, It shames me that I held him in this cause Half mine own heart, my better hand and eye, Mine other soul and worthier. Pray you, go: Let us not hold you; sir, be quit of us; Go home, lie safe, and give God thanks; lie close, Keep your head warm and covered. Nay, be wise; We are fit for no such wise folk's fel- lowship, No married man's who being bid forth to fight Holds his wife's kirtle fitter wear for man Than theirs who put on iron: I did know it,</p>	<p>Albeit I would not know; this man that was, This soul and sinew of a noble seed, Love and the lips that burn a bride- groom's through Have charmed to deathward, and in steel's good stead Left him a silken spirit.</p> <p><i>Tichborne.</i> By that faith Which yet I think you have found as fast in me As ever yours I found, you wrong me more Than, were I that your words can make me not, I had wronged myself and all our cause; I hold No whit less dear, for love's sake even, than love, Faith, honor, friendship, all that all my days Was only dear to my desire, till now This new thing, dear as all these only were, Made all these dearer. If my love be less Toward you, toward honor, or this cause, then think I love my wife not either, — whom you know How close at heart I cherish, — but in all Play false alike. Lead now which way you will, And wear what likeness: though to all men else It look not smooth, smooth shall it seem to me, And danger be not dangerous; where you go, For me shall wildest ways be safe, and straight For me the steepest; with your eyes and heart Will I take count of life and death, and think No thought against your counsel; yea, by heaven, I had rather follow and trust my friend, and die, Than halt and hark mistrustfully be- hind To live of him mistrusted.</p>
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Babington. Why, well said :
Strike hands upon it ; I think you shall
not find
A trustless pilot of me. Keep we fast,
And hold you fast my counsel, we shall
see
The state high-builed here of heretic
hope
Shaken to dust and death. Here comes
more proof
To warrant me no liar. — You are
welcome, sirs ;
Enter BALLARD, disguised, and SAVAGE.
Good father captain, come you plumed
or cowed,
Or stoled or sworded, here at any hand
The true heart bids you welcome.
Ballard. Sir, at none
Is folly welcome to mine ears or eyes.
Nay, stare not on me stormily : I say,
I bid at no hand welcome, by no name,
Be it ne'er so wise or valiant on men's
lips,
Pledge health to folly, nor forecast
good hope
For them that serve her, I, but take of
men
Things ill done ill at any hand alike.
Ye shall not say I cheered you to your
death,
Nor would, though naught more danger-
ous than your death,
Or deadlier for our cause and God's in
ours,
Were here to stand the chance of, and
your blood,
Shed vainly with no seed for faith to
sow,
Should be not poison for men's hopes
to drink.
What is this picture ? Have ye sense
or souls,
Eyes, ears, or wits to take assurance
in
Of how ye stand in strange men's eyes
and ears,
How fare upon their talking tongues,
how dwell
In shot of their suspicion, and sustain
How great a work how lightly ? Think
ye not
These men have ears and eyes about
your ways,

Walk with your feet, work with your
hands, and watch
When ye sleep sound and babble in
your sleep ?
What knave was he, or whose man
sworn and spy,
That drank with you last night ? whose
hiring lip
Was this that pledged you, Master
Babington,
To a foul quean's downfall and a fair
queen's rise ?
Can ye not seal your tongues from taver-
n speech,
Nor sup abroad but air may catch it
back,
Nor think who set that watch upon your
lips
Yourselves can keep not on them ?
Babington. What, my friends !
Here is one come to counsel, God be
thanked,
That bears commission to rebuke us
all.
Why, hark you, sir, you that speak
judgment, you
That take our doom upon your double
tongue
To sentence and accuse us with one
breath,
Our doomsman and our justicer for
sin,
Good Captain Ballard, Father Fortes-
cue,
Who made you guardian of us poor
men, gave
Your wisdom wardship of our follies,
chose
Your faith for keeper of our faiths, that
yet
Were never taxed of change or doubted ?
You,
'Tis you that have an eye to us, and
take note
What time we keep, what place, what
company,
How far may wisdom trust us to be
wise
Or faith esteem us faithful ; and your-
self
Were once the hiring hand and
tongue and eye
That waited on this very Walsingham

To spy men's counsels and betray their blood
 Whose trust had sealed you trusty? By God's light,
 A goodly guard I have of you, to crave
 What man was he I drank with yesternight,
 What name, what shape, what habit, as, forsooth,
 Were I some statesman's knave and spotted spy,
 The man I served, and care dnot how, being dead,
 His molten gold should glut my throat in hell,
 Might question of me whom I snared last night,
 Make inquisition of his face, his gait, His speech, his likeness. Well, be answered, then:
 By God, I know not; but God knows I think
 The spy most dangerous on my secret walks,
 And witness of my ways most worth my fear,
 And deadliest listener to devour my speech,
 Now questions me of danger, and the tongue
 Most like to sting my trust and life to death
 Now taxes mine of rashness.
Ballard. Is he mad?
 Or are ye brain-sick all with heat of wine,
 That stand and hear him rage like men in storms
 Made drunk with danger? Have ye sworn with him
 To die the fool's death too of furious fear
 And passion scared to slaughter of itself?
 Is there none here that knows his cause or me,
 Nor what should save or spoil us?
Tickborne. Friend, give ear:
 For God's sake, yet be counselled.
Babington. Ay, for God's!
 What part hath God in this man's counsels? Nay,

Take you part with him; nay, in God's name go;
 What should you do to bide with me? Turn back:
 There stands your captain.
Savage. Hath not one man here
 One spark in spirit or sprinkling left of shame?
 I that looked once for no such fellowship,
 But soldiers' hearts in shapes of gentlemen,
 I am sick with shame to hear men's jangling tongues
 Outnoise their swords unbloodied.
 Hear me, sirs;
 My hand keeps time before my tongue, and hath
 But wit to speak in iron; yet as now
 Such wit were sharp enough to serve our turn
 That keenest tongues may serve not.
 One thing sworn
 Calls on our hearts: the queen must singly die,
 Or we, half dead men now with dallying, must
 Die several deaths for her brief one, and stretched
 Beyond the scope of sufferance; wherefore here
 Choose out the man to put this peril on,
 And gird him with this glory; let him pass
 Straight hence to court, and through all stays of state
 Strike death into her heart.
Babington. Why, this rings right;
 Well said, and soldierlike; do thus, and take
 The vanguard of us all for honor.
Savage. Ay,
 Well would I go, but seeing no courtly suit
 Like yours, her servants and her pensioners,
 The doorkeepers will bid my baseness back
 From passage to her presence.
Babington. Oh! for that,
 Take this, and buy: nay, start not from your word;
 You shall not.

Savage. Sir, I shall not.

Babington. Here's more gold;
Make haste, and God go with you. If
the plot
Be blown on once of men's suspicious
breath,
We are dead, and all die bootless
deaths—be swift—
And her we have served we shall but
surely slay.

I will make trial again of Walsingham
If he misdoubt us. Oh! my cloak and
sword—

[Knocking within.]
I will go forth myself. What noise is
that?

Get you to Gage's lodging; stay not
here;

Make speed without for Westminster;
perchance

There may we safely shift our shapes
and fly,

If the end be come upon us.

Ballard. It is here.

Death knocks at door already. Fly!
farewell.

Babington. I would not leave you,
but they know you not:
You need not fear, being found here
singly.

Ballard. No.

Babington. Nay, halt not, sirs; no
word but haste; this way,
Ere they break down the doors. God
speed us well!

*[Exeunt all but BALLARD. As they go
out enter an Officer with Soldiers.]*

Officer. Here's one fox yet by the
foot: lay hold on him.

Ballard. What would you, sirs?

Officer. Why, make one foul bird
fast,
Though the full flight be scattered; for
their kind

Must prey not here again, nor here
put on

The jay's loose feathers for the raven
priest's

To mock the blear-eyed marksman:
these plucked off

Shall show the nest that sent this
fledgling forth,

Hatched in the hottest holy nook of
hell.

Ballard. I am a soldier.

Officer. Ay, the badge we know
Whose broiery signs the shoulders of
the file

That Satan marks for Jesus. Bind him
fast:

Blue satin and slashed velvet and gold
lace,

Methinks we have you, and the hat's
band here

So seemly set with silver buttons, all
As here was down in order. By my

faith,
A goodly ghostly friend to shrive a
maid

As ever kissed for penance. pity 'tis
The hangman's hands must hallow him

again
When this lay slough slips off, and
twist one rope

For priest to swing with soldier. Bring
him hence. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.—CHARTLEY.

MARY STUART and MARY BEATON.

Mary Stuart. We shall not need
keep house for fear to-day:

The skies are fair and hot; the wind
sits well

For hound and horn to chime with. I
will go.

Mary Beaton. How far from this to
Tixall?

Mary Stuart. Nine or ten,
Or what miles more, I care not: we

shall find
Fair field and goodly quarry, or he

lies,
The gospeller that bade us to the sport,
Protesting yesternight the shire had

none
To shame Sir Walter Aston's. God

be praised,
I take such pleasure yet to back my

steed
And bear my crossbow for a deer's

death well,
I am almost half content—and yet I

lie—
To ride no harder nor more dangerous

heat,
And hunt no beast of game less gallant

Mary Beaton. Nay,
 You grew long since more patient.
Mary Stuart. Ah, God help!
 What should I do but learn the word
 of him
 These years and years, the last word
 learnt but one,
 That ever I loved least of all sad
 words?
 The last is death for any soul to learn,
 The last save death is patience.
Mary Beaton. Time enough
 We have had ere death of life to learn
 it in
 Since you rode last on wilder ways
 than theirs
 That drive the dun deer to his death.
Mary Stuart. Eighteen —
 How many more years yet shall God
 mete out
 For thee and me to wait upon their
 will,
 And hope or hope not, watch or sleep,
 and dream
 Awake or sleeping? Surely fewer, I
 think,
 Than half these years that all have
 less of life
 Than one of those more fleet that flew
 before.
 I am yet some ten years younger than
 this queen,
 Some nine or ten; but if I die this
 year,
 And she some score years longer than
 I think
 Be royal-titled, in one year of mine
 I shall have lived the longer life, and
 die
 The fuller-fortuned woman. Dost thou
 mind
 The letter that I writ nigh two years
 gone
 To let her wit what privacies of hers
 Our trusty dame of Shrewsbury's
 tongue made mine
 Ere it took fire to sting her lord and
 me?
 How thick soe'er o'erscurfed with poi-
 sonous lies,
 Of her I am sure it lied not; and per-
 chance
 I did the wiselier, having writ my fill,

Yet to withhold the letter when she
 sought
 Of me to know what villainies had it
 poured
 In ears of mine against her innocent
 name:
 And yet thou knowest what mirthful
 heart was mine
 To write her word of these, that, had
 she read,
 Had surely, being but woman, made
 her mad,
 Or haply, being not woman, had not
 'Faith,
 How say'st thou? did I well?
Mary Beaton. Ay, surely well
 To keep that back you did not ill to
 write.
Mary Stuart. I think so, and again
 I think not; yet
 The best I did was bid thee burn it
 She,
 That other Bess I mean of Hardwick,
 hath
 Mixed with her gall the fire at heart
 of hell,
 And all the mortal medicines of the
 world,
 To drug her speech with poison; and
 God wot
 Her daughter's child here that I bred
 and loved,
 Bess Pierpoint, my sweet bedfellow
 that was,
 Keeps too much savor of her grand-
 am's stock
 For me to match with Nau: my secre-
 tary
 Shall with no slip of hers ingraft his
 own,
 Begetting shame or peril to us all
 From her false blood and fiery tongue.
 Except
 I find a mate as meet to match with
 him
 For truth to me as Gilbert Curle hath
 found,
 I will play Tudor once, and break the
 banns,
 Put on the feature of Elizabeth
 To frown their hands in sunder.
Mary Beaton. Were it not
 Some tyranny to take her likeness on

And bitter-hearted grudge of matrimony
 For one and not his brother secretary,
 Forbid your Frenchman's banns for jealousy,
 And grace you: English with such liberal love
 As Barbara fails not yet to find of you
 Since she writ Curle for Mowbray?
 And herein
 There shows no touch of Tudor in your mood
 More than its wont is; which indeed is naught;
 The world, they say, for her should waste, ere man
 Should get her virginal goodwill to wed.
Mary Stuart. I would not be so tempered of my blood,
 So much misshapen as she in spirit and flesh,
 To be more fair of fortune. She should hate
 Not me — albeit she hate me deadly — more
 Than thee or any woman. By my faith,
 Fain would I know, what knowing not of her now
 I muse upon and marvel, — if she have
 Desire or pulse or passion of true heart
 Fed full from natural veins, or be indeed
 All bare and barren all as dead men's bones
 Of all sweet nature and sharp seed of love,
 And those salt springs of life, through fire and tears
 That bring forth pain and pleasure in their kind
 To make good days and evil, all in her
 Lie sere and sapless as the dust of death.
 I have found no great good hap in all my days,
 Nor much good cause to make me glad of God;
 Yet have I had and lacked not of my life
 My good things and mine evil, being not yet

Barred from life's natural ends of evil and good
 Foredoomed for man and woman through the world
 Till all their works be nothing; and of mine
 I know but this — though I should die to-day.
 I would not take for mine her fortune.
Mary Beaton. No?
 Myself perchance I would not.
Mary Stuart. Dost thou think
 That fire-tongued witch of Shrewsbury spake once truth,
 Who told me all those quaint, foul, merry tales
 Of our dear sister, that at her desire
 I writ to give her word of, and at thine
 Withheld, and put the letter in thine hand
 To burn, as was thy counsel? For my part,
 How loud she lied soever in the charge
 That for adultery taxed me with her lord,
 And, being disproved before the council here,
 Brought on their knees to give themselves the lie
 Her and her sons by that first lord of four
 That took in turn this hell-mouthed hag to wife,
 And got her kind upon her, — yet in this
 I do believe she lied not more than I
 Reporting her by record, how she said
 What infinite times had Leicester and his queen
 Plucked all the fruitless fruit of baffled love
 That being contracted privily they might;
 With what large gust of fierce and foiled desire
 This votaress crowned, whose vow could no man break,
 Since God, whose hand shuts up the unkindly womb,
 Had sealed it on her body, man by man
 Would course her kindless lovers, and in quest

<p>Pursue them hungering as a hound in heat, Full on the fiery scent and slot of lust, That men took shame and laughed and marvelled: one, Her chamberlain, so hotly would she trace, And turn perforce from cover, that himself, Being tracked at sight thus in the general eye, Was even constrained to play the piteous hare, And wind and double till her amorous chase Were blind with speed and breathless; but the worst Was this, that for this country's sake and shame's Our huntress Dian could not be content With Hatton, and another born her man And subject of this kingdom, but to heap The heavier scandal on her countrymen Had cast the wild growth of her lust away On one base-born, a stranger, whom of nights Within her woman's chamber would she seek To kiss and play for shame with secretly; And with the duke her bridegroom that should be,— That should and could not, seeing forsooth no man Might make her wife or woman,— had she dealt As with this knave his follower; for by night She met him coming at her chamber door In her bare smock and night-rail, and thereon Bade him come in; who there abode three hours. But fools were they that thought to bind her will, And stay with one man, or allay the mood That ranging still gave tongue on several heats</p>	<p>To hunt fresh trails of lusty love. All this, Thou knowest, on record truly was set down, With much more villanous else: she prayed me write That she might know the natural spirit and mind Toward her of this fell witch whose rancorous mouth Then bayed my name, as now being great with child By her fourth husband, in whose charge I lay As here in Paulet's; so being moved I wrote, And yet I would she had read it, though not now Would I re-write each word again, albeit I might, or thou, were I so minded, or Thyself so moved to bear such witness. But 'Tis well we know not how she had borne to read All this and more; what counsel gave the dame, With loud excess of laughter urging me To enter on those lists of love-making My son for suitor to her, who thereby Might greatly serve and stead me in her sight; And, I replying that such a thing could be But held a very mockery, she returns, The queen was so infatuate and distraught With high conceit of her fair fretted face As of a heavenly goddess, that herself Would take it on her head with no great pains To bring her to believe it easily; Being so past reason fain of flattering tongues, She thought they mocked her not nor lied who said They might not sometimes look her full in face For the light glittering from it as the sun;</p>
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And so perforce must all her women	Belied her, saying she then must needs
say,	die soon
And she herself that spake, who durst	For timeless fault of nature. Now
not look	belike
For fear to laugh out each in other's	The soothsaying that speaks short her
face	span to be
Even while they fooled, and fed her	May prove more true of presage.
vein with words,	<i>Mary Beaton.</i> Have you hope
Nor let their eyes cross when they	The chase to-day may serve our further
spake to her,	ends
And set their feature fast in a frame	Than to renew your spirit, and bid
To keep grave countenance with gross	time speed?
mockery lined;	<i>Mary Stuart.</i> I see not, but I may:
And how she prayed me chide her	the hour is full
daughter, whom	Which I was bidden expect of them to
She might by no means move to take	bear
this way,	More fruit than grows of promise.
And for her daughter Talbot was	Babington
assured	Should tarry now not long; from
She could not ever choose but laugh	France our friends
outright	Lift up their heads to us-ward, and
Even in the good queen's flattered face.	await
God wot,	What comfort may confirm them from
Had she read all, and in my hand set	our part
down,	Who sent us comfort; Ballard's secret
I could not blame her though she had	tongue
sought to take	Has kindled England, striking from
My head for payment: no less poise on	men's hearts
earth	As from a flint the fire that slept, and
Had served, and hardly, for the writer's	made
fee;	Their dark dumb thoughts and dim
I could not much have blamed her; all	disfigured hopes
the less,	Take form from his and feature, aim
That I did take this, though from slan-	and strength,
derous lips,	Speech and desire toward action; all
For gospel and not slander, and that	the shires
now	Wherein the force lies hidden of our
I yet do well believe it.	faith
<i>Mary Beaton.</i> And herself	Are stirred and set on edge of present
Had well believed so much, and surely	deed
seen, —	And hope more imminent now of help
For all your protest of discredit made	to come
With God to witness that you could	And work to do than ever; not this
not take	time
Such tales for truth of her, nor would	We hang on trust in succor that comes
not, — yet	short
You meant not she should take your	By Philip's fault from Austrian John,
word for this,	whose death
As well I think she would not.	Put widow's weeds on mine unwedded
<i>Mary Stuart.</i> Haply, no.	hope,
We do protest not thus to be believed.	Late trothplight to his enterprise in vain
And yet the witch in one thing seven	That was to set me free, but might not
years since	seal

<p>The faith it pledged, nor on the hand of hope Make fast the ring that weds desire with deed And promise with performance; Parma stands More fast now for us in his uncle's stead, Albeit the lesser warrior, yet in place More like to avail us, and in happier time To do like service; for my cousin of Guise, His hand and league hold fast our kinsman king, If not to bend and shape him for our use, Yet so to govern as he may not thwart Our forward undertaking till its force Discharge itself on England: from no side I see the shade of any fear to fail As those before so baffled; heart and hand Our hope is armed with trust more strong than steel, And spirit to strike more helpful than a sword In hands that lack the spirit; and here to-day It may be I shall look this hope in the eyes, And see her face transfigured. God is good: He will not fail his faith forever. Oh That I were now in saddle! Yet an hour, And I shall be as young again as May Whose life was come to August; like this year, I had grown past midway of my life, and sat Heartsick of summer; but new-mounted now I shall ride right through shine and shade of spring With heart and habit of a bride, and bear A brow more bright than fortune. Truth it is, Those words of bride and May should on my tongue</p>	<p>Sound now not merry, ring no joy-bells out In ears of hope or memory; not for me Have they been joyous words; but this fair day All sounds that ring delight in fortun- ate ears, And words that make men thankful, even to me Seem thankworthy for joy they have given me not And hope which now they should not. <i>Mary Beaton.</i> Nay, who knows? The less they have given of joy, the more they may; And they who have had their happiness before Have hope not in the future; time o'er- past And time to be have several ends, nor wear One forward face and backward. <i>Mary Stuart.</i> God, I pray, Turn thy good words to gospel, and make truth Of their kind presage! but our Scots- women Would say, to be so joyous as I am, Though I had cause, as surely cause I have, Were no good warrant of good hope for me. I never took such comfort of my trust In Norfolk or Northumberland, nor looked For such good end as now of all my fears From all devices past of policy To join my name with my misnaturaed son's In handfast pledge with England's, ere my foes His counsellors had flawed his craven faith, And moved my natural blood to cast me off Who bore him in my body, to come forth Less childlike than a changeling. But not long Shall they find means by him to work their will,</p>
--	---

Nor he bear head against me; hope
 was his
 To reign forsooth without my fellow-
 ship,
 And he that with me would not shall
 not now
 Without or with me wield not or divide
 Or part or all of empire.
Mary Beaton. Dear my queen,
 Vex not your mood with sudden change
 of thoughts;
 Your mind but now was merrier than
 the sun
 Half rid by this through morning: we
 by noon
 Should blithely mount and meet him.
Mary Stuart. So I said.
 My spirit is fallen again from that glad
 strength
 Which even but now arrayed it; yet
 what cause
 Should dull the dancing measure in my
 blood
 For doubt or wrath. I know not. Being
 once forth,
 My heart again will quicken.

[Sings.]

*And ye maun braid your yellow hair,
 And busk ye like a bride;
 Wi' sevenscore men to bring ye hame,
 And ae true love beside;
 Between the birk and the green rowan
 Fu' blithely shall ye ride.*

*O ye maun braid my yellow hair,
 But braid it like nae bride:
 And I maun gang my ways, mither,
 Wi' nae true love beside;
 Between the kirk and the kirkyard
 Fu' sadly shall I ride.*

How long since,
 How long since was it last I heard or
 sang
 Such light lost ends of old faint rhyme
 worn thin
 With use of country songsters? When
 we twain
 Were maidens but some twice a span's
 length high,
 Thou hadst the happier memory to hold
 rhyme,
 But not for songs the merrier.

Mary Beaton. This was one
 That I would sing after my nurse, I
 think,
 And weep upon in France at six years
 old
 To think of Scotland.

Mary Stuart. Would I weep for
 that,
 Woman or child, I have had now years
 enough
 To weep in; thou wast never French
 in heart,
 Serving the queen of France. Poor
 queen that was,
 Poor boy that played her bridegroom!
 now they seem
 In these mine eyes that were her eyes
 as far
 Beyond the reach and range of old-
 world time
 As their first fathers' graves.

Enter SIR AMYAS PAULET.

Paulet. Madam, if now
 It please you to set forth, the hour is
 full,
 And there your horses ready.

Mary Stuart. Sir, my thanks.
 We are bounden to you and this goodly
 day
 For no small comfort. Is it your will
 we ride

Accompanied with any for the nonce
 Of our own household?

Paulet. If you will, to-day
 Your secretaries have leave to ride with
 you.

Mary Stuart. We keep some state,
 then, yet. I pray you, sir,
 Doth he wait on you that came here
 last month,—

A low-built, lank-cheeked, Judas-
 bearded man,
 Lean, supple, grave, pock-pitten, yellow
 polled,

A smiling fellow with a downcast eye?

Paulet. Madam, I know the man for
 none of mine.

Mary Stuart. I give you joy as you
 should give God thanks,
 Sir, if I err not; but meseemed this
 man
 Found gracious entertainment here, and
 took

Such counsel with you as I surely
thought
Spake him your friend, and honorable.
But now,
If I misread not an ambiguous word,
It seems you know no more of him or
less

Than Peter did, being questioned, of
his Lord.

Paulet. I know not where the cause
were to be sought
That might for likeness or unlikeness
found

Make seemly way for such compari-
son
As turns such names to jest and bitter-
ness :

Howbeit, as I denied not nor disclaimed
To know the man you speak of, yet I
may

With very purity of truth profess
The man to be not of my following.

Mary Stuart. See
How lightly may the tongue that thinks
no ill

Or trip or slip, discoursing that or
this

With grave good men in purity and
truth,

And come to shame even with a word!
God wot,

We had need put bit and bridle in our
lips

Ere they take on them of their foolish-
ness

To change wise words with wisdom. —
Come, sweet friend,

Let us go seek our kind with horse and
hound

To keep us witless company ; belike,
There shall we find our fellows.

[*Exeunt MARY STUART and MARY
BEATON.*

Paulet. Would to God
This day had done its office ! mine till
then

Holds me the verier prisoner.

Enter PHILLIPPS.

Phillipps. She will go ?

Paulet. Gladly, poor sinful fool, —
more gladly, sir,
Than I go with her.

Phillipps. Yet you go not far :

She is come too near her end of way
faring
To tire much more men's feet that
follow.

Paulet. Ay.
She walks but half blind yet to the end.

Even now
She spake of you, and questioned
doubtfully

What here you came to do, or held what
place

Or commerce with me : when you
caught her eye,

It seems your courtesy by some grace-
less chance

Found but scant grace with her.

Phillipps. 'Tis mine own blame,
Or fault of mine own feature ; yet for-
sooth

I greatly covet not their gracious hap
Who have found or find most grace
with her. I pray,

Doth Wade go with you ?

Paulet. Nay, — what ! know you
not ? —

But with Sir Thomas Gorges, from the
court,

To drive this deer at Tixall.

Phillipps. Two years since,
He went, I think, commissioned from
the queen

To treat with her at Sheffield ?

Paulet. Ay, and since
She hath not seen him ; who being
known of here

Had haply given her swift suspicion
edge,

Or cause at least of wonder.

Phillipps. And I doubt
His last year's entertainment oversea
As our queen's envoy to demand of
France

Her traitor Morgan's body, whence he
brought

Naught save dry blows back from the
Duke d'Aumale,

And for that prisoner's quarters here
to hang

His own not whole but beaten, should
not much

Incline him to more good regard of her
For whose love's sake her friends have
dealt with him

So honorably; nor she that knows of
 Re the less like to take his presence
 here
 For no good presage to her: you have
 both done well
 To keep his hand as close herein as
 mine.

Amos. Sir, by my faith I know not
 for myself.

What part is for mine honor, or where-
 in

Of all this action laid upon mine hand
 The name and witness of a gentleman
 May gain desert or credit, and increase
 In seed and harvest of good men's
 esteem

For heritage to his heirs, that men
 unborn

Whose fame is as their name derived
 from his

May reap in reputation; and indeed
 I look for none advancement in the
 world

Further than this that yet for no man's
 sake

Would I forego, to keep the name I
 have

And honor, which no son of mine shall
 say

I have left him not for any deed of mine
 As perfect as my sire bequeathed it me:
 I say, for any word or work yet past
 No tongue can thus far tax me of decline

From that fair forthright way of gentle-
 man,

Nor shall for any that I think to do
 Or aught I think to say alive: howbeit,
 I were much bounden to the man would
 say

But so much for me in our mistress' ear,
 The treasurer's, or your master Walsing-
 ham's,

Whose office here I have undergone
 thus long,

And had I leave more gladly would
 put off

Than ever I put on me; being not one
 That out of love toward England even
 or God

At mightiest men's desire would lightly
 be

For loyalty disloyal, or approved
 In trustless works a trusty traitor: this
 He that should tell them of me, to pro-
 cure

The speedier end here of this work
 imposed,

Should bind me to him more heartily
 than thanks

Might answer.

Philips. Good Sir Amyas, you and I
 Hold no such office in this dangerous
 time

As men make love to for their own
 name's sake

Or personal lust of honor; but herein
 I pray you yet take note, and pardon
 me

If I for the instance mix your name with
 mine,

That no man's private honor lies at
 gage,

Nor is the stake set here to play for
 less

Than what is more than all men's
 names alive, —

The great life's gage of England; in
 whose name

Lie all our own impledged, as all our
 lives

For her redemption forfeit, if the cause
 Call once upon us. Not this gift or
 this,

Or what best likes us, or were gladliest
 given,

Or might most honorably be parted
 with

For our more credit on her best be-
 half,

Doth she we serve, this land that made
 us men,

Require of all her children; but
 demands

Of our great duty toward her full deserts,
 Even all we have of honor or of life,

Of breath or fame, to give her. What
 were I,

Or what were you, being mean or nobly
 born,

Yet moulded both of one land's natural
 womb

And fashioned out of England, to deny
 What gift she crave soever, choose and
 grudge

What grace we list to give or what
 withhold,
 Refuse and reckon with her when she
 bids
 Yield up, forsooth, not life but fame to
 come,
 A good man's praise or gentleman's
 repute,
 Or lineal pride of children, and the
 light
 Of loyalty remembered? which of these
 Were worth our mother's death, or
 shame that might
 Fall for one hour on England? She
 must live,
 And keep in all men's sight her honor
 fast,
 Though all we die dishonored; and
 myself
 Know not nor seek of men's report to
 know
 If what I do to serve her till I die
 Be honorable or shameful, and its end
 Good in men's eyes or evil; but for
 God,
 I find not why the name or fear of
 him
 Herein should make me swerve or
 start aside
 Through faint heart's falsehood, as a
 broken bow
 Snapped in his hand that bent it, ere
 the shaft
 Find out his enemies' heart, and I that
 end
 Whereto I am sped for service even of
 him
 Who put this office on us.
Paulet. Truly, sir,
 I lack the wordy wit to match with
 yours,
 Who speak no more than soldier; this
 I know, —
 I am sick in spirit and heart to have in
 hand
 Such work or such device of yours as
 yet
 For fear and conscience of what worst
 may come
 I dare not well bear through.
Phillips. Why, so last month
 You writ my master word, and me to
 boot,

I had set you down a course for many
 things
 You durst not put in execution, nor
 Consign the packet to this lady's hand
 That was returned from mine, seeing all
 was well,
 And you should hold yourself most
 wretched man
 If by your mean or order there should
 spring
 Suspicion 'twixt the several messengers
 Whose hands unwitting each of other
 ply
 The same close trade for the same
 golden end,
 While either holds his mate a faithful
 fool,
 And all their souls, base-born or gently
 bred,
 Are coined and stamped and minted
 for our use
 And current in our service: I thereon,
 To assuage your doubt and fortify your
 fear,
 Was posted hither, where by craft and
 pains
 The web is wound up of our enter-
 prise,
 And in our hands we hold her very
 heart
 As fast as all this while we held im-
 pawned
 The faith of Barnes that stood for Gif-
 ford here
 To take what letters for his mistress
 came
 From southward through the ambassa-
 dor of France,
 And bear them to the brewer, your hon-
 est man,
 Who wist no further of his fellowship
 Than he of Gifford's, being as simple
 knaves
 As knavish each in his simplicity,
 And either serviceable alike, to shift
 Between my master's hands and yours
 and mine
 Her letters writ and answered to and
 fro;
 And all these faiths as wether-tight
 and safe
 As was the box 'hat held those letters
 close

At bottom of the barrel, to give up
 The charge there sealed and ciphered,
 and receive
 A charge as great in peril and in price
 To yield again, when they drew off the
 beer
 That weekly served this lady's house-
 hold whom
 We have drained as dry of secrets
 drugged with death
 As ever they this vessel, and return
 To her own lips the dregs she brewed
 or we
 For her to drink have tempered. What
 of this
 Should seem so strange now to you, or
 distaste
 So much the daintier palate of your
 thoughts,
 That I should need reiterate you by
 word
 The work of us o'erpast, or fill your
 ear
 With long foregone recital, that at last
 Your soul may start not, or your sense
 recoil,
 To know what end we are come to, or
 what hope
 We took in hand to cut this peril off
 By what close mean soe'er and what
 foul hands
 Unwashed of treason, which it yet mis-
 likes
 Your knightly palm to touch or close
 with, seeing
 The grime of gold is baser than of
 blood
 That barks their filthy fingers? yet
 with these
 Must you cross hands and grapple, or
 let fall
 The trust you took to treasure.
Paulet. Sir, I will,
 Even till the queen take back that gave
 it; yet
 Will not join hands with these, nor
 take on mine
 The taint of their contagion; knowing
 no cause
 That should confound or couple my
 good name
 With theirs more hateful than the reek
 of hell.

You had these knaveries and these
 knaves in charge,
 Not I that knew not how to handle
 them,
 Nor whom to choose for chief of trea-
 sons, him
 That in mine ignorant eye, unused to
 read
 The shameful scripture of such faces,
 bare
 Graved on his smooth and simple
 cheek and brow
 No token of a traitor; yet this boy,
 This milk-mouthed weanling with his
 maiden chin,
 This soft-lipped knave, late suckled as
 on blood
 And nursed of poisonous nipples, have
 you not
 Found false or feared by this, whom
 first you found
 A trustier thief and worthier of his
 wage
 Than I, poor man, had wit to find
 him? I,
 That trust no changelings of the church
 of hell,
 No babes reared priestlike at the paps
 of Rome,
 Who have left the old harlot's deadly
 dugs drawn dry,
 I lacked the craft to rate this knave of
 price,
 Your smock-faced Gifford, at his worth
 aright,
 Which now comes short of promise.
Phillipps. Oh, not he!
 Let not your knighthood for a slippery
 word
 So much misdoubt his knaveship: here
 from France,
 On hint of our suspicion in his ear
 Half-jestingly recorded, that his hand
 Were set against us in one politic track
 With his old yokefellows in craft and
 creed,
 Betraying not them to us but ourselves
 to them,
 My Gilbert writes me with such heat
 of hand,
 Such piteous protestation of his faith.
 So stuffed and swoln with burly-bellied
 oaths, —

<p>And God and Christ confound him if he lie, And Jesus save him as he speaks mere truth, — My gracious godly priestling, that your- self Must sure be moved to take his truth on trust, Or stand for him approved an atheist. <i>Paulet.</i> Well, That you find stuff of laughter in such gear, And mirth to make out of the godless mouth Of such a twice-turned villain, for my part, I take in token of your certain trust, And make therewith mine own assur- ance sure, To see betimes an end of all such craft As takes the faith forsworn of loud- tongued liars, And blasphemies of brothel-breathing knaves, To build its hope or break its jest upon; And so commend you to your charge, and take Mine own on me less gladly; for by this She should be girt to ride, as the old saw saith, Out of God's blessing into the warm sun, And out of the warm sun into the pit That men have dug before her, as her- self Had dug for England else a deeper grave To hide our hope forever: yet I would This day and all that hang on it were done. [<i>Exeunt.</i></p> <p>SCENE III. — BEFORE TIXALL PARK. MARY STUART, MARY BEATON, PAU- LET, CURLE, NAU, and <i>Attendants.</i> <i>Mary Stuart.</i> If I should nevermore back steed alive, But now had ridden hither this fair day The last road ever I must ride on earth,</p>	<p>Yet would I praise it, saying of all days gone And all roads ridden in sight of stars and sun Since first I sprang to saddle, here at last I had found no joyless end. These ways are smooth, And all this land's face merry; yet I find The ways even therefore not so good to ride, And all the land's face therefore less worth love, Being smoother for a palfrey's maiden pace And merrier than our moors for out- look: nay, I lie to say so; there the wind and sun Make madder mirth by midsummer, and fill With broader breadth and lustier length of light The heartier hours that clothe for even and dawn Our bosom-belted billowy-blossoming hills Whose hearts break out in laughter like the sea For miles of heaving heather. Ye should mock My banished praise of Scotland; and in faith I praised it but to prick you on to praise Of your own goodly land; though field and wood Be parked and parcelled to the sky's edge out, And this green Stafford moorland smooth and strait That we but now rode over, and by ours Look pale for lack of large live moun- tain bloom Wind-buffed with morning, it should be Worth praise of men whose lineal honor lives In keeping here of history. But me seems I have heard, Sir Amyas, of your lib- eral west</p>
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As of a land more affluent-souled than
 this,
 And fruitful-hearted as the south-wind:
 here
 I find a fair-faced change of temperate
 clime
 From that bald hill-brow in a broad
 bare plain
 Where winter laid us both his prison-
 ers late
 Fast by the feet at Tutbury; but men
 say
 Your birthright in this land is fallen
 more fair
 In goodlier ground of heritage: per-
 chance,
 Grief to be now barred thence by mean
 of me,
 Who less than you can help it or my-
 self,
 Makes you ride sad and sullen.
Paulet. Madam, no:
 I pray you lay not to my wilful charge
 The blame or burden of discourtesy
 That but the time should bear which
 lays on me
 This weight of thoughts untimely.
Mary Stuart. Nay, fair sir,
 If I, that have no cause in life to seem
 Glad of my sad life more than prison-
 ers may,
 Take comfort yet of sunshine, he me-
 thinks
 That holds in ward my days and nights
 might well
 Take no less pleasure of this broad
 blithe air
 Than his poor charge that too much
 troubles him.
 What! are we nigh the chase?
Paulet. Even hard at hand.
Mary Stuart. Can I not see between
 the glittering leaves
 Glean the dun hides and flash the
 startled horns
 That we must charge and scatter?
 Were I queen,
 And had a crown to wager on my hand,
 Sir, I would set it on the chance to-
 day
 To shoot a flight beyond you.
Paulet. Verily,
 The hazard were too heavy for my skill:

I would not hold your wager.
Mary Stuart. No! and why?
Paulet. For fear to come a bowshot
 short of you
 On the left hand, unluckily.
Mary Stuart. My friend,
 Our keeper's wit-shaft is too keen for
 ours
 To match its edge with pointless iron
 Sir,
 Your tongue shoots farther than my
 hand or eye
 With sense or aim can follow.—(Gil-
 bert Curle,
 Your heart yet halts behind this cry
 of hounds,
 Hunting your own deer's trail at home,
 who lies
 Now close in covert till her bearing-
 time
 Be full to bring forth kindly fruit of
 kind
 To love that yet lacks issue; and in
 sooth
 I blame you not to bid all sport go by
 For one white doe's sake travailing,
 who myself
 Think long till I may take within mine
 arm
 The soft fawn suckling that is yeaned
 not yet,
 But is to make her mother. We must
 hold
 A goodly christening feast with prison-
 er's cheer
 And mirth enow for such a tender thing
 As will not weep more to be born in
 bonds
 Than babes born out of gaoler's ward,
 nor grudge
 To find no friend more fortunate than I
 Nor happier hand to welcome it, nor
 name
 More prosperous than poor mine to
 wear, if God
 Shall send the new-made mother's
 breast, for love
 Of us that love his mother's maiden-
 hood,
 A maid to be my name-child, and in
 all
 Save love to them that love her, by
 God's grace,

Most unlike me; for whose unborn
sweet sake
Pray you meantime be merry. — 'Faith,
methinks
Here be more huntsmen out afield to-
day,
And merrier than my guardian. Sir,
look up:
What think you of these riders? — All
my friends,
Make on to meet them.
Paulet. There shall need no haste:
They ride not slack or lamely.
Mary Stuart. Now, fair sir,
What say you to my chance on wager?
Here
I think to outshoot your archery. — By
my life,
That too must fail if hope now fail me;
these
That ride so far off yet, being come,
shall bring
Death or deliverance. Prithee, speak
but once;
[*Aside to MARY BEATON.*
Say, these are they we looked for; say,
thou too
Hadst hope to meet them; say, they
should be here,
And I did well to look for them; O
God!
Say but I was not mad to hope; see
there;
Speak, or I die.
Mary Beaton. Nay, not before they
come.
Mary Stuart. Dost thou not hear my
heart? It speaks so loud,
I can hear nothing of them. Yet I
will not
Fail in mine enemy's sight. This is
mine hour
That was to be for triumph; God, I pray,
Stretch not its length out longer!
Mary Beaton. It is past.
*Enter SIR THOMAS GORGES, SIR WIL-
LIAM WADE, and Soldiers.*
Mary Stuart. What man is this that
stands across our way?
Gorges. One that hath warrant, mad-
am, from the queen
To arrest your French and English
secretary,

And for more surety see yourself re-
moved
To present ward at Tixall here hard by,
As in this paper stands of her sub-
scribed. —
Lay hands on them.
Mary Stuart. Was this your riddle's
word? [To PAULET.
You have shot beyond me indeed, and
shot to death
Your honor with my life. — Draw, sirs,
and stand:
Ye have swords yet left to strike with
once, and die
By these our foes are girt with. Some
good friend, —
I should have one yet left of you, —
take heart,
And slay me here. For God's love,
draw: they have not
So large a vantage of us, we must needs
Bear back one foot from peril. Give
not way:
Ye shall but die more shamefully than
here,
Who can but here die fighting. What!
no man?
Must I find never at my need alive
A man with heart to help me? O my
God,
Let me die now, and foil them! —
Paulet, you,
Most knightly liar and traitor, was not
this
Part of your charge, to play my hang-
man too,
Who have played so well my dooms-
man, and betrayed
So honorably my trust, so bravely set
A snare so loyal to make sure for death
So poor a foolish woman? Sir, or you
That have this gallant office, great as
his,
To do the deadliest errand and most
vile
That even your mistress ever laid on
man,
And sent her basest knave to bear and
slay,
You are likewise of her chivalry, and
should not
Shrink to fulfil your title; being a
knight,

I would not chide now, Gilbert, though
 my tongue
 Had strength yet left for chiding, and
 its edge
 Were yet a sword to smite with, or my
 wrath
 A thing that babes might shrink at;
 only this
 Take with you for your poor queen's
 true last word, —
 That if they let me live so long to see
 The fair wife's face again from whose
 soft side,
 Now laboring with your child, by violent
 hands
 You are reft perforce for my sake, while
 I live
 I will have charge of her more carefully
 Than of mine own life's keeping, which
 indeed
 I think not long to keep, nor care, God
 knows,
 How soon or how men take it. Nay,
 good friend,
 Weep not: my weeping time is well-
 nigh past,
 And theirs whose eyes have too much
 wept for me
 Should last no longer. — Sirs, I give you
 thanks
 For thus much grace and patience shown
 of you,
 My gentle gaolers, towards a queen
 unqueened,
 Who shall nor get nor crave again of
 man
 What grace may rest in him to give her.
 Come,
 Bring me to bonds again, and her with
 me
 That hath not stood so nigh me all
 these years
 To fall ere life doth from my side, or
 take
 Her way to death without me till I die.

ACT II. — WALSINGHAM.

SCENE I. — WINDSOR CASTLE.

QUEEN ELIZABETH and SIR FRANCIS
 WALSINGHAM.

Elizabeth. What will ye make me?
 Let the council know

I am yet their loving mistress, but they
 lay
 Too strange a burden on my love who
 send
 As to their servant word what ways to
 take,
 What sentence of my subjects given
 subscribe,
 And in mine own name utter. Bid
 them wait:
 Have I not patience? and was never
 quick
 To teach my tongue the deadly word of
 death,
 Lest one day strange tongues blot my
 fame with blood:
 The red addition of my sister's name
 Shall brand not mine.
Walsingham. God grant your mercy
 shown
 Mark not your memory like a martyr's
 red
 With pure imperial heart's-blood of
 your own
 Shed through your own sweet-spirited
 height of heart
 That held your hand from justice!
Elizabeth. I would rather
 Stand in God's sight so signed with
 mine own blood
 Than with a sister's — innocent; or
 indeed
 Though guilty — being a sister's —
 might I choose,
 As being a queen I may not surely, —
 no —
 I may not choose, you tell me.
Walsingham. Nay, no man
 Hath license of so large election given
 As once to choose, being servant called
 of God,
 If he will serve or no, or save the
 name
 And slack the service.
Elizabeth. Yea, but in his Word
 I find no word that whets for king
 killing
 The sword kings bear for justice: yet
 I doubt,
 Being drawn, it may not choose but
 strike at root —
 Being drawn to cut off treason. Wal-
 singham,

You are more a statesman than a gos- peller;	I am bounden to them, and will charge for this
Take for your tongue's text now no text of God's,	The hangman thank them heartily; they shall not
But what the Devil has put into their lips	Lack daylight means to die by. God, meseems,
Who should have slain me; nay, what by God's grace,	Will have me not die darkling like a dog,
Who bared their purpose to us, through pain or fear	Who hath kept my lips from poison, and my heart
Hath been wrung thence of secrets writ in fire	From shot of English knave or Spanish, both
At bottom of their hearts. Have they confessed?	Dubbed of the Devil or damned his doctors, whom
<i>Walsingham.</i> The twain trapped first in London.	My riddance from all ills that plague man's life
<i>Elizabeth.</i> What, the priest? Their twice-turned Ballard, ha?	Should have made great in record; and for wage
<i>Walsingham.</i> Madam, not he.	Your Ballard hath not better hap to fee Than Lopez had or Parry. Well, he lies
<i>Elizabeth.</i> God's blood! ye have spared not him the torment, knaves?	As dumb in bonds as those dead dogs in earth,
Of all I would not spare him.	You say; but of his fellows newly ta'en
<i>Walsingham.</i> Verily, no;	There are that keep not silence: what say these?
The rack hath spun his life's thread out so fine	Pour in mine ears the poison of their plot
There is but left for death to slit in twain	Whose fangs have stung the silly snakes to death.
The thickness of a spider's.	<i>Walsingham.</i> The first a soldier, Savage, in these wars
<i>Elizabeth.</i> Ay, still dumb?	That sometimes serving sought a trai- tor's luck
<i>Walsingham.</i> Dumb for all good the pains can get of him;	Under the prince Farnese, then of late At Rheims was tempted of our traitors there,
Had he drunk dry the chalice of his craft Brewed in design abhorred of even his friends	Of one in chief, Gifford the seminarist, My smock-faced spy's good uncle, to take off
With poisonous purpose toward your majesty,	Or the earl of Leicester or your gra- cious self;
He had kept scarce harder silence.	And since his passage hither, to con- firm
<i>Elizabeth.</i> Poison? ay—	His hollow-hearted hardihood, hath had
That should be still the churchman's household sword,	Word from this doctor more solicitous yet
Or saintly staff to bruise crowned heads from far,	Sent by my knave his nephew, who of late
And break them with his precious balms that smell	Was in the seminary of so deadly seed Their reader in philosophy, that their head,
Rank as the jaws of death, or festal fume	
When Rome yet reeked with Borgia. But the rest	
Had grace enow to grant me for good- will	
Some death more gracious than a rat's? God wot,	

Even Cardinal Allen, holds for just and good
 The purpose laid upon his hand; this man
 Makes yet more large confession than of this,
 Saying from our Gilbert's trusty mouth he had
 Assurance that in Italy the Pope
 Hath levies raised against us, to set forth
 For seeming succor toward the Parmesan,
 But in their actual aim bent hither, where
 With French and Spaniards in one front of war
 They might make in upon us; but from France
 No foot shall pass for inroad on our peace
 Till—so they phrase it—by these Catholics here
 Your majesty be taken, or—
Elisabeth. No more—
 But only taken? springed but bird-like?
 Ha!
 They are something tender of our poor personal chance—
 Temperately tender: yet I doubt the springe
 Had haply maimed me no less deep than life
 Sits next the heart most mortal. Or—so be it
 I slip the springe—what yet may shackle France,
 Hang weights upon their purpose who should else
 Be great of heart against us? They take time
 Till I be taken—or till what signal else
 As favorable?
Walsingham. Till she they serve be brought
 Safe out of Paulet's keeping.
Elisabeth. Ay? they know him
 So much my servant, and his guard so good,
 That sound of strange feet marching on our soil
 Against us in his prisoner's name perchance

Might from the walls wherein she sits his guest
 Raise a funereal echo? Yet I think
 He would not dare—what think'st thou might he dare
 Without my word for warrant? If I knew
 This—
Walsingham. It should profit not your grace to know
 What may not be conceivable for truth
 Without some stain on honor.
Elisabeth. Nay, I say not
 That I would have him take upon his hand
 More than his trust may warrant: yet have men,
 Good men, for very truth of their good hearts,
 Put loyal hand to work as perilous
 Well,
 God wot I would not have him so transgress—
 If such be called transgressors.
Walsingham. Let the queen
 Rest well assured he shall not. So far forth
 Our swordsman Savage witnesses of these
 That moved him toward your murder but in trust
 Thereby to bring invasion over sea:
 Which one more gently natured of his birth,
 Tichborne, protests with very show of truth
 That he would give no ear to, knowing, he saith,
 The miseries of such conquest: nor, it seems,
 Heard this man aught of murderous purpose bent
 Against your highness.
Elisabeth. Naught? why then, again,
 To him I am yet more bounden, who may think,
 Being found but half my traitor, at my hands
 To find but half a hangman.
Walsingham. Nay, the man
 Herein seems all but half his own man,
 being

Made merely out of stranger hearts and brains	Her manifest foul conscience: on which proof
Their engine of conspiracy; for thus Forsooth he pleads, that Babington his friend	I will proclaim her to the parliament So self-convicted. Yet I would not have
First showed him how himself was wrought upon	Her name and life by mortal evidence Touched at the trial of them that now shall die,
By one man's counsel and persuasion, one	Or by their charge attained: lest my- self
Held of great judgment, — Ballard, on whose head	Fall in more peril of her friends than she
All these lay all their forfeit.	Stands yet in shot of judgment.
<i>Elizabeth.</i> Yet shall each	<i>Walsingham.</i> Be assured,
Pay for himself red coin of ransom down	Madam, the process of their treasons judged
In costlier drops than gold is. But of these	Shall tax not her before her trial-time With public note of clear complicity Even for that danger's sake which moves you.
Why take we thought? Their natural- subject blood	<i>Elizabeth. Me</i>
Can wash not out their sanguine-sealed attempt,	So much it moves not for my mere life's sake —
Nor leave us marked as tyrant: only she	Which I would never buy with fear of death —
That is the head and heart of all your fears,	As for the general danger's, and the shame's
Whose hope or fear is England's, quick or dead,	Thence cast on queenship and on wo- manhood
Leaves or imperilled or impeached of blood	By mean of such a murderess. But, for them,
Me, that with all but hazard of mine own,	I would the merited manner of their death
God knows, would yet redeem her. I will write	Might for more note of terror be re- ferred
With mine own hand to her privily, — what else? —	To me and to my council: these at least
Saying, if by word as privy from her hand	Shall hang for warning in the world's wide eye
She will confess her treasonous prac- tices,	More high than common traitors, with more pains
They shall be wrapped in silence up, and she	Being ravished forth of their more vil- lanous lives
By judgment live unscathed.	Than feed the general throat of justice. Her
<i>Walsingham.</i> Being that she is,	Shall this too touch, whom none that serves henceforth
So surely will she deem of your great grace,	But shall be sure of hire more terrible Than all past wage of treason.
And see it but as a snare set wide, or net	<i>Walsingham.</i> Why, so far As law gives leave —
Spread in the bird's sight vainly.	<i>Elizabeth.</i> What prat'st thou me of law?
<i>Elizabeth.</i> Why, then, well:	
She, casting off my grace, from all men's grace	
Cuts off herself, and even aloud avows By silence and suspect of jealous heart	

God's blood! is law for man's sake
 made, or man
 For law's sake only, to be held in
 bonds,
 Led lovingly like hound in huntsman's
 leash
 Or child by finger, not for help or stay,
 But hurt and hinderance? Is not all
 this land
 And all its hope and surety given to
 time
 Of sovereignty and freedom, all the
 fame
 And all the fruit of manhood hence to
 be,
 More than one rag or relic of its law
 Wherewith all these lie shackled? as
 too sure
 Have states no less than ours been
 done to death
 With gentle counsel and soft-handed
 rule
 For fear to snap one thread of ordi-
 nance
 Though thence the state were strangled.
Wattingham. Madam, yet
 There need no need be here of law's
 least breach,
 That of all else is worst necessity —
 Being such a mortal medicine to the
 state
 As poison drunk to expel a feverish
 taint
 Which air or sleep might purge as
 easily.
Elizabeth. Ay; but if air be poison-
 struck with plague,
 Or sleep to death lie palsied, fools
 were they,
 Faint hearts and faithless, who for
 health's fair sake
 Should fear to cleanse air, pierce and
 probe the trance,
 With purging fire or iron. Have your
 way.
 God send good end of all this, and pro-
 cure
 Some mean whereby mine enemies'
 craft and his
 May take no feet but theirs in their
 own toils,
 And no blood shed be innocent as
 mine.

SCENE II. — CHARTLEY.

MARY BEATON and SIR AMYAS
 PAULET.

Paulet. You should do well to bid
 her less be moved
 Who needs fear less of evil. Since we
 came
 Again from Tixall this wild mood of
 hers
 Hath vexed her more than all men's
 enmities
 Should move a heart more constant.
 Verily,
 I thought she had held more rule upon
 herself
 Than to call out on beggars at the
 gate
 When she rode forth, crying she had
 naught to give,
 Being all as much a beggar too as they,
 With all things taken from her.
Mary Beaton. Being so served,
 In sooth she should not show nor
 shame nor spleen.
 It was but seventeen days ye held her
 there
 Away from all attendance, as in bonds
 Kept without change of raiment, and
 to find,
 Being thence haled hither again, no
 nobler use,
 But all her papers plundered — then
 her keys
 By force of violent threat wrung from
 the hand
 She scarce could stir to help herself
 abed:
 These were no matters that should
 move her.
Paulet. None,
 If she be clean of conscience, whole of
 heart,
 Nor else than pure in purpose, but
 maligned
 Of men's suspicions: how should one
 thus wronged
 But hold all hard chance good to
 approve her case
 Blameless, give praise for all, turn all
 to thanks
 That might unload her of so sore a
 charge,

Despoiled not, but disburdened? Her
great wrath
Pleads hard against her, and itself
spake loud
Alone, ere other witness might unseal
Wrath's fierce interpretation: which
ere long
Was of her secretaries expounded.

Mary Beaton. Sir,
As you are honorable, and of equal
heart
Have shown such grace as man being
manful may
To such a piteous prisoner as desires
Naught now but what may hurt not
loyalty
Though you comply therewith to com-
fort her,
Let her not think your spirit so far
incensed

By wild words of her mistress cast on
you
In heat of heart and bitter fire of
spleen,
That you should now close ears against
a prayer
Which else might fairly find them
open.

Paulet. Speak
More short and plainly: what I well
may grant
Shall so seem easiest granted.

Mary Beaton. There should be
No cause, I think, to seal your lips up,
though
I crave of them but so much breath as
may
Give mine ear knowledge of the wit-
ness borne
(If aught of witness were against her
borne)

By those her secretaries you spake of.

Paulet. This
With hard expostulation was drawn
forth
At last of one and other, that they
twain
Had writ by record from their lady's
mouth

To Babington some letter which implies
Close conscience of his treason, and
good-will

To meet his service with complicity:

But one thing found therein of dead
liest note

The Frenchman swore they set not
down, nor she

Bade write one word of favor nor assent
Answering this murderous motion to-
ward our queen:

Only, saith he, she held herself not
bound

For love's sake to reveal it, and thereby
For love of enemies do to death such
friends

As only for her own love's sake were
found

Fit men for murderous treason: and
so much

Her own hand's transcript of the word
she sent

Should once produced bear witness of
her.

Mary Beaton. Ay?
How then came this withholden?

Paulet. If she speak
But truth, why, truth should sure be
manifest,

And shall, with God's good-will, to
good men's joy

That wish not evil: as at Fotheringay
When she shall come to trial must be
tried

If it be truth or no: for which assay
You shall do toward her well and faith-
fully

To bid her presently prepare her soul
That it may there make answer.

Mary Beaton. Presently?
Paulet. Upon the arraignment of her
friends who stand

As 'twere at point of execution now
Ere sentence pass upon them of their
sin.

Would you no more with me?

Mary Beaton. I am bounden to you
For thus much tidings granted.

Paulet. So farewell. [Exit
Mary Beaton. So fare I well or ill as
one who knows

He shall not fare much further toward
his end.

Here looms on me the landmark of my
life,

That I have looked for now some score
of years

<p>Even with long-suffering eagerness of heart And a most hungry patience. I did know, Yea, God, thou knowest I knew this all that while, From that day forth when even these eyes beheld Fall the most faithful head in all the world, Toward her most loving, and of me most loved, By doom of hers that was so loved of him He could not love me nor his life at all, Nor his own soul, nor aught that all men love, Nor could fear death nor very God, or care If there were aught more merciful in heaven Than love on earth had been to him. Chastelard, I have not had the name upon my lips That stands for sign of love the truest in man Since first love made him sacrifice of men, This long sad score of years retributive Since it was cast out of her heart and mind Who made it mean a dead thing; nor, I think, Will she remember it before she die More than in France the memories of old friends Are like to have yet forgotten; but for me, Haply, thou knowest, so death not all be death If all these years I have had not in my mind Through all these chances this one thought in all,— That I shall never leave her till she die. Nor surely now shall I much longer serve Who fain would lie down at her foot and sleep, Fain, fain have done with waking. Yet my soul</p>	<p>Knows, and yet God knows, I would set not hand To such a work as might put on the time, And make death's foot more forward for her sake: Yea, were it to deliver mine own soul From bondage and long-suffering of my life, I would not set mine hand to work her wrong. Tempted I was — but hath God need of me To work his judgment, bring his time about, Approve his justice if the word be just, That whoso doeth shall suffer his own deed, Bear his own blow, to weep tears back for tears, And bleed for bloodshed? God should spare me this That once I held the one good hope on earth,— To be the mean and engine of her end, Or some least part at least therein: I prayed, God, give me so much grace — who now should pray, Tempt me not, God. My heart swelled once to know I bore her death about me; as I think Indeed I bear it: but what need hath God That I should clinch his doom with craft of mine? What needs the wrath of hot Elizabeth Be blown aflame with mere past writing read, Which hath to enkindle it higher already proof Of present practice on her state and life? Shall fear of death or love of England fail, Or memory faint, or foresight fall stark blind, That there should need the whet and spur of shame To turn her spirit into some chafing snake's, And make its fang more feared for mortal? Yet</p>
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I am glad, and I repent me not, to know
I have the writing in my bosom sealed
That bears such matter, with her own
hand signed,

As she that yet repents her not to have
writ
Repents her not that she refrained to
send,

And fears not but long since it felt the
fire—

Being fire itself to burn her, yet un-
quenched,

But in my hand here covered harmless
up

Which had in charge to burn it. What
perchance

Might then the reading of it have
wrought for us,

If all this fiery poison of her scoffs
Making the foul froth of a serpent's
tongue

More venomous, and more deadly
toward her queen,

Even Bess of Hardwick's bitterest
babbling tales,

Had touched at heart the Tudor vein
indeed?

Enough it yet were surely, though that
vein

Were now the gentlest that such hearts
may hold,

And all doubt's trembling balance that
way bent,

To turn, as with one mortal grain cast
in,

The scale of grace against her life that
writ,

And weigh down pity deathward.

Enter MARY STUART.

Mary Stuart. Have we found
Such kindness of our keeper as may
give

Some ease from expectation? or must
hope

Still fret for ignorance how long here
we stay

As men abiding judgment?

Mary Beaton. Now not long,
He tells me, need we think to tarry;
since

The time and place of trial are set, next
month

To hold it in the castle of Fotheringay.

Mary Stuart. Why, he knows well
I were full easily moved

To set forth hence; there must I find
more scope

To commune with the ambassador of
France

By letter thence to London: but, God
help,

Think these folk truly, doth she verily
think,

What never man durst yet, nor woman
dreamed,

May one that is nor man nor woman
think,

To bring a queen born subject of no
laws

Here in subjection of an alien law
By foreign force of judgment? Were

she wise,
Might she not have me privily made
away?

And being nor wise, nor valiant but of
tongue,

Could she find yet foolhardiness of heart
Enough to attain the rule of royal
rights

With murderous madness? I will think
not this

Till it be proven indeed.

Mary Beaton. A month come round,
This man protests, will prove it.

Mary Stuart. Ay! protests?
What protestation of what Protestant

Can unmake law that was of God's
mouth made,

Unwrite the writing of the world, unsay
The general saying of ages? If I go,

Compelled of God's hand or constrained
of man's,

Yet God shall bid me not nor man
enforce

My tongue to plead before them for my
life.

I had rather end as kings before me,
die

Rather by shot or stroke of murderous
hands,

Than so make answer once in face of
man

As one brought forth to judgment. Are
they mad,

And she most mad for envious heart of
all,

To make so mean account of me?
 Methought,
 When late we came back hither, soiled
 and spent
 And sick with travel, I had seen their
 worst of wrong
 Full-faced, with its most outrage: when
 I found
 My servant Curle's young new-delivered
 wife
 Without priest's comfort, and her babe
 unblest,
 A nameless piteous thing born ere its
 time,
 And took it from the mother's arms
 abed,
 And bade her have good comfort, since
 myself
 Would take all charge against her hus-
 band laid
 On mine own head to answer, — deem-
 ing not
 Man ever durst bid answer for my-
 self
 On charge as mortal, — and, mine almo-
 ner gone,
 Did I not crave of Paulet for a grace
 His chaplain might baptize me this poor
 babe,
 And was denied it, and with mine own
 hands
 For shame and charity moved to chris-
 ten her
 There with scant ritual, in his heretic
 sight,
 By mine own woful name, whence God,
 I pray,
 For her take off its presage? I mis-
 deemed,
 Who deemed all these and yet far more
 than these
 For one born queen indignities enough,
 On one crowned head enough of buf-
 fets: more
 Hath time's hand laid upon me; yet I
 keep
 Faith in one word I spake to Paulet, say-
 ing
 Two things were mine though I stood
 spoiled of all
 As of my letters and my privy coin
 By pickpurse hands of office: these
 things yet

Might none take thievish hold upon to
 strip
 His prisoner naked of her natural
 dower, —
 The blood yet royal running here un-
 spilled,
 And that religion which I think to keep
 Fast as this royal blood until I die.
 So, where at last and howsoe'er I fare,
 I need not much take thought, nor thou
 for love
 Take of thy mistress pity: yet meseems
 They dare not work their open will on
 me;
 But God's it is that shall be done, and I
 Find end of all in quiet. I would sleep
 On this strange news of thine, that
 being awake
 I may the freshlier front my sense there-
 of
 And thought of life or death. Come in
 with me.

SCENE III. — TYBURN.

A Crowd of Citizens.

First Citizen. Is not their hour yet
 on? Men say the queen
 Bade spare no jot of torment in their
 end
 That law might lay upon them.
Second Citizen. Truth it is,
 To spare what scourge soe'er man's
 justice may
 Twist for such caitiff traitors, were to
 grieve
 God's with mere inobservance. Hear
 you not
 How yet the loud lewd braggarts of
 their side
 Keep heart to threaten that for all this
 foil
 They are not foiled indeed, but yet the
 work
 Shall prosper with deliverance of their
 queen,
 And death for her of ours, though they
 should give
 Of their own lives for one an hundred-
 fold?
Third Citizen. These are bold
 mouths: one that shall die to-
 day,

Being this last week arraigned at Westminster,
Had no such heart, they say, to his defence,
Who was the main head of their treasons.

First Citizen. Ay,

And yesterday, if truth belie not him,
Durst with his doomed hand write some word of prayer
To the queen's self, her very grace, to crave
Grace of her for his gracelessness, that she
Might work, on one too tainted to deserve,
A miracle of compassion, whence her fame
For pity of sins too great for pity of man
Might shine more glorious than his crime showed foul
In the eye of such a mercy.

Second Citizen. Yet men said

He spake at his arraignment soberly
With clear mild looks and gracious gesture, showing
The purport of his treasons in such wise
That it seemed pity of him to hear them, how
All their beginnings and proceedings had
First head and fountain only for their spring
From ill persuasions of that poisonous priest
Who stood the guiltiest near, by this man's side
Approved a valiant villain. Barnwell next,
Who came but late from Ireland here to court,
Made simply protestation of design
To work no personal ill against the queen,
Nor paint rebellion's face as murder's red
With blood imperial: Tichborne then avowed
He knew the secret of their aim, and kept,

And held forsooth himself no traitor, yet

In the end would even plead guilty: Donne with him,

And Salisbury, who not less professed he still

Stood out against the killing of the queen,

And would not hurt her for a kingdom. So,

When thus all these had pleaded, one by one

Was each man bid say fairly, for his part,

Why sentence should not pass: and Ballard first,

Who had been so sorely racked he might not stand,

Spake, but as seems to none effect; of whom

Said Babington again, he set them on,

He first, and most of all him, who believed

This priest had power to assoil his soul alive

Of all else mortal treason. Ballard then,

As in sad scorn — *Yea, Master Babington,*

*Quoth he, lay all upon me, but I wish
For you the shedding of my blood might be*

The saving of your life: howbeit, for that,

Say what you will; and I will say no more.

Nor spake the swordsman Savage aught again,

Who, first arraigned, had first avowed his cause

Guilty; nor yet spake Tichborne aught: but Donne

Spake, and the same said Barnwell, — each had sinned

For very conscience only; Salisbury last

Besought the queen remission of his guilt.

Then spake Sir Christopher Hatton for the rest

That sat with him commissioners, and showed

How by dark doctrine of the seminaries,
 And instance most of Ballard, had been
 brought
 To extreme destruction here of body
 and soul
 A sort of brave youths otherwise endowed
 With goodly gifts of birthright; and in
 fine
 There was the sentence given that here
 even now
 Shows seven for dead men in our present
 sight,
 And shall bring six to-morrow forth to
 die.

Enter BABINGTON, BALLARD (*carried
 in a chair*), TICHBORNE, SAVAGE,
 BARNWELL, TILNEY, and ABINGTON,
*guarded: Sheriff, Executioner, Chaplain,
 etc.*

First Citizen. What, will they speak?

Second Citizen. Ay; each hath leave
 in turn

To show what mood he dies in toward
 his cause.

Ballard. Sirs, ye that stand to see
 us take our doom,

I being here given this grace to speak
 to you

Have but my word to witness for my
 soul,

That all I have done and all designed
 to do

Was only for advancement of true faith
 To furtherance of religion: for myself
 Aught would I never, but for Christ's
 dear church

Was mine intent all wholly, to redeem
 Her sore affliction in this age and land,
 As now may not be yet: which know-
 ing for truth,

I am readier even at heart to die than
 live.

And dying I crave of all men pardon
 whom

My doings at all have touched, or who
 thereat

Take scandal; and forgiveness of the
 queen

If on this cause I have offended her.

Savage. The like say I, that have no
 skill in speech,

But heart enough with faith at heart to
 die,

Seeing but for conscience and the com-
 mon good,

And no preferment but this general
 weal,

I did attempt this business.

Barnwell. I confess

That I, whose seed was of that hallowed
 earth

Whereof each pore hath sweated blood
 for Christ,

Had note of these men's drifts, which I
 deny

That ever I consented with, or could
 In conscience hold for lawful. That I
 came

To spy for them occasions in the court,
 And there being noted of her Majesty
 She seeing mine eyes peer sharply like
 a man's

That had such purpose as she wist
 before

Prayed God that all were well — if this
 were urged,

I might make answer, it was not un-
 known

To divers of the council that I there
 Had matters to solicit of mine own
 Which thither drew me then: yet I
 confess

That Babington, espying me thence
 returned,

Asked me what news: to whom again
 I told,

Her majesty had been abroad that
 day,

With all the circumstance I saw there.
 Now,

If I have done her majesty offence,
 I crave her pardon: and assuredly
 If this my body's sacrifice might yet
 Establish her in true religion, here
 Most willingly should this be offered
 up.

Tilney. I came not here to reason of
 my faith,

But to die simply like a Catholic, pray-
 ing

Christ give our queen Elizabeth long
 life,

And warning all youth born take heed
 by me.

Abington. I likewise, and if aught I have erred in aught I crave but pardon as for ignorant sin, Holding at all points firm the Catholic faith; And all things charged against me I confess, Save that I ever sought her highness' death: In whose poor kingdom yet ere long, I fear, Will be great bloodshed.

Sheriff. Seest thou, Abington, Here all these people present of thy kind Whose blood shall be demanded at thy hands If dying thou hide what might endanger them? Speak therefore, why or by what mortal mean Should there be shed such blood?

Abington. All that I know You have on record: take but this for sure, — This country lives for its iniquity Loathed of all countries, and God loves it not. Whereon I pray you trouble me no more With questions of this world, but let me pray, And in mine own wise make my peace with God.

Babington. For me, first head of all this enterprise, I needs must make this record of myself, I have not conspired for profit, but in trust Of men's persuasions whence I stood assured This work was lawful which I should have done, And meritorious as toward God; for which No less I crave forgiveness of my queen, And that my brother may possess my lands In heritage else forfeit with my head.

Tichborne. Good countrymen and my dear friends, you look For something to be said of me, that am

But an ill orator; and my text is worse. Vain were it to make full discourse of all This cause that brings me hither, which before Was all made bare, and is well known to most That have their eyes upon me: let me stand For all young men, and most for those born high, Their present warning here: a friend I had, Ay, and a dear friend, one of whom I made No small account, whose friendship for pure love To^o this hath brought me: I may not deny He told me all the matter, how set down, And ready to be wrought; which always I Held impious, and denied to deal therein: But only for my friend's regard was I Silent, and verified a saying in me, Who so consented to him. Ere this thing chanced, How brotherly we twain lived heart in heart Together, in what flourishing estate, This town well knows: of whom went all report Through her loud length of Fleet-street and the Strand And all parts else that sound men's fortunate names, But Babington and Tichborne? that therein There was no haughtiest threshold found of force To brave our entry; thus we lived our life, And wanted nothing we might wish for: then, For me, what less was in my head, God knows, Than high state matters? Give me now but leave Scarce to declare the miseries I sustained

Since I took knowledge of this action,
whence
To his estate I well may liken mine,
Who could forbear not one forbidden
thing
To enjoy all else afforded of the world:
The terror of my conscience hung on
me;
Who, taking heed what perils girt me,
went
To Sir John Peters hence in Essex,
there
Appointing that my horses by his mean
Should meet me here in London,
whence I thought
To flee into the country: but being
here
I heard how all was now betrayed
abroad;
Whence Adam-like we fled into the
woods,
And there were taken. My dear coun-
trymen,
Albeit my sorrows well may be your
joy,
Yet mix your smiles with tears: pity
my case,
Who, born out of an house whose name
descends
Even from two hundred years ere Eng-
lish earth
Felt Norman heel upon her, wore it
yet
Till this mishap of mine unspotted.
Sirs,
I have a wife, and one sweet child: my
wife,
My dear wife Agnes: and my grief is
there;
And for six sisters too left on my hand:
All my poor servants were dispersed, I
know,
Upon their master's capture: all which
things
Most heartily I sorrow for: and though
Naught might I less have merited at
her hands,
Yet had I looked for pardon of my
fault
From the queen's absolute grace and
clemency;
That the unexpired remainder of my
years

Might in some sort have haply recom-
pensed
This former guilt of mine whereof I
die:
But seeing such fault may find not such
release
Even of her utter mercies, heartily
I crave at least of her and all the world
Forgiveness, and to God commend my
soul,
And to men's memory this my penitence
Till our death's record die from out the
land.
First Citizen. God pardon him!
Stand back: what ail these
knaves
To drive and thrust upon us? Help
me, sir;
I thank you: hence we take them full
in view:
Hath yet the hangman there his knife
in hand?

ACT III.—BURGHLEY.

SCENE I.—*The presence-chamber in Fotheringay Castle. At the upper end, a chair of state as for QUEEN ELIZABETH; opposite, in the centre of the hall, a chair for MARY STUART. The Commissioners seated on either side along the wall: to the right, the Earls, with LORD CHANCELLOR BROMLEY and LORD TREASURER BURGHLEY; to the left, the Barons, with the Knights of the Privy Council, among them WALSINGHAM and PAULET; POPHAM, EGERTON, and GAWDY, as Counsel for the Crown. Enter MARY STUART, supported by SIR ANDREW MELVILLE, and takes her place.*

Mary Stuart. Here are full many
men of counsel met;
Not one for me.

[*The Chancellor rises.*
Bromley. Madam, this court is held
To make strait inquisition as by law
Of what with grief of heart our queen
has heard,—
A plot upon her life, against the faith
Here in her kingdom established: on
which cause

Our charge it is to exact your answer here,
And put to proof your guilt or innocence.

Mary Stuart (rising). Sirs, whom by strange constraint I stand before,
My lords, and not my judges, — since no law

Can hold to mortal judgment answerable

A princess free-born of all courts on earth, —

I rise not here to make response as one Responsible toward any for my life,
Or of mine acts accountable to man,
Who see none higher save only God in heaven.

I am no natural subject of your land,
That I should here plead as a criminal charged,

Nor in such wise appear I now: I came
On your queen's faith to seek in England help

By trothplight pledged me: where by promise-breach

I am even since then her prisoner held in ward:

Yet, understanding by report of you
Some certain things I know not of to be

Against me brought on record, by my will

I stand content to hear and answer these.

Bromley. Madam, there lives none born on earth so high

Who for this land's laws' breach within this land

Shall not stand answerable before those laws.

Burghley. Let there be record of the prisoner's plea

And answer given such protest here set down,

And so proceed we to this present charge.

Gawdy. My lords, to unfold by length of circumstance

The model of this whole conspiracy
Should lay the pattern of all treasons bare

That ever brought high state in danger.
This

No man there lives among us but hath heard, —

How certain men of our queen's household folk,

Being wrought on by persuasion of their priests,

Drew late a bond between them, binding these

With others of their faith accomplices
Directed first of Anthony Babington

By mean of six for execution chosen
To slay the queen their mistress, and thereon

Make all her trustiest men of trust away;

As, my lord treasurer Burghley present here,

Lord Hunsdon, and Sir Francis Walsingham,

And one that held in charge a while ago

This lady now on trial, — Sir Francis Knowles.

That she was hereto privy, to her power
Approving and abetting their device,

It shall not stand us in much need to show,

Whose proofs are manifoldly manifest
On record written of their hands and hers.

Mary Stuart. Of all this I know nothing: Babington

I have used for mine intelligencer, sent
With letters charged at need, but never yet

Spake with him, never writ him word of mine

As privy to these close conspiracies,
Nor word of his had from him. Never came

One harmful thought upon me toward your queen,

Nor knowledge ever that of other hearts
Was harm designed against her.

Proofs, ye say,
Forsooth ye hold to impeach me: I desire

But only to behold and handle them
If they in sooth of sense be tangible

More than mere air and shadow.

Burghley. Let the clerk
Produce those letters writ from Babington.

Mary Stuart. What then? It may be
 such were writ of him:
 Be it proved that they came ever in my
 hands.
 If Babington affirm so much, I say
 He, or who else will say it, lies openly.
Gawdy. Here is the man's confession
 writ; and here
 Ballard's the Jesuit; and the soldier's
 here,
 Savage, that served with Parma.
Mary Stuart. What of these?
 Traitors they were, and traitor-like they
 lied.
Gawdy. And here the last her letter
 of response
 Confirming and approving in each
 point
 Their purpose, writ direct to Babington.
Mary Stuart. My letter? None of
 mine it is. perchance
 It may be in my cipher charactered,
 But never came from or my tongue or
 hand:
 I have sought mine own deliverance,
 and thereto
 Solicited of my friends their natural
 help:
 Yet certain whom I list not name there
 were,
 Whose offers made of help to set me
 free
 Receiving, yet I answered not a word.
 Howbeit, desiring to divert the storm
 Of persecution from the Church, for
 this
 To your queen's grace I have made
 most earnest suit:
 But for mine own part, I would pur-
 chase not
 This kingdom with the meanest one
 man's death
 In all its commonalty, much less the
 queen's.
 Many there be have dangerously
 designed
 Things that I knew not: yea, but very
 late
 There came a letter to my hand which
 craved
 My pardon if by enterprise of some
 Were undertaken aught unknown of
 me.

A cipher lightly may one counterfeit,
 As he that vaunted him of late in
 France
 To be my son's base brother; and I
 fear
 Lest this, for aught mine ignorance of
 it knows,
 May be that secretary's fair handiwork
 Who sits to judge me, and hath prac-
 tised late,
 I hear, against my son's life and mine
 own.
 But I protest I have not so much as
 thought
 Nor dreamed upon destruction of the
 queen:
 I had rather spend most gladly mine
 own life
 Than for my sake the Catholics should
 be thus
 Afflicted only in very hate of me,
 And drawn to death so cruel as these
 tears
 Gush newly forth to think of.
Burghley. Here no man
 Who hath showed himself true subject
 to the state
 Was ever for religion done to death;
 But some for treason, that against the
 queen
 Upheld the pope's bull and authority.
Mary Stuart. Yet have I heard it
 otherwise affirmed,
 And read in books set forth in print as
 much.
Burghley. They that so write say too
 the queen hath here
 Made forfeit of her royal dignity.
Walsingham. Here I call God to
 record on my part
 That personally or as a private man
 I have done naught misbeseeing
 honesty,
 Nor as I bear a public person's place
 Done aught thereof unworthy. I con-
 fess
 That, being right careful of the queen's
 estate
 And safety of this realm, I have
 curiously
 Searched out the practices against it:
 nay,
 Herein had Ballard offered me his help,

I durst not have denied him; yea, I would
 Have recompensed the pains he had taken. Say
 I have practised aught with him, why did he not,
 To save his life, reveal it?
Mary Stuart. Pray you, sir,
 Take no displeasure at me. truth it is
 Report has found me of your dealings, blown
 From lip to ear abroad, wherein myself
 I put no credit; and could but desire
 Yourself would all as little make account
 Of slanders flung on me. Spies, sure, are men
 Of doubtful credit, which dissemble things
 Far other than they speak. Do not believe
 That I gave ever or could give consent
 Once to the queen's destruction: I would never,
 These tears are bitter witness, never would
 Make shipwreck of my soul by compassing
 Destruction of my dearest sister.
Gawdy. This
 Shall soon by witness be disproved: as here
 Even by this letter from Charles Paget's hand
 Transcribed, which Curle your secretary hath borne,
 Plain witness you received, touching a league
 Betwixt Mendoza and Ballard, who conferred
 Of this land's fore-ordained invasion, thence
 To give you freedom.
Mary Stuart. What of this? ye shoot
 Wide of the purpose: this approves not me
 Consenting to the queen's destruction.
Gawdy. That stands proven enough by word of Babington,
 Who dying avowed it, and by letters passed
 From him to you, whom he therein acclaims
 As his most dread and sovereign lady and queen,
 And by the way makes mention passing-ly
 Of a plot laid by transference to convey
 This kingdom to the Spaniard.
Mary Stuart. I confess
 There came a priest unto me, saying if I
 Would not herein bear part, I with my son
 Alike should be debarred the inheritance:
 His name ye shall not have of me; but this
 Ye know, that openly the Spaniard lays
 Claim to your kingdom, and to none will give
 Place ever save to me.
Burghley. Still stands the charge,
 On written witness of your secretaries,
 Great on all points against you.
Mary Stuart. Wherefore then
 Are not these writers with these writings brought
 To outface me front to front? For Gilbert Curle,
 He is in the Frenchman's hands a waxen toy,
 Whom the other, once mine uncle's secretary,
 The Cardinal's of Lorraine, at his mere will
 Moulds, turns, and tempers; being himself a knave
 That may be hired or scared with peril or coin
 To swear what thing men bid him.
 Truth again
 Is this that I deny not, seeing myself
 Against all right held fast in English ward,
 I have sought all help where I might hope to find;
 Which thing that I dispute not, let this be
 The sign that I disclaim no jot of truth
 In all objected to me. For the rest,
 All majesty that moves in all the world,
 And all safe station of all princes born,
 Fall, as things unrespected, to the ground,
 If on the testimony of secretaries

<p>And on their writings merely these depend, Being to their likeness thence debased. For me, Naught I delivered to them but what first Nature to me delivered, that I might Recover yet at length my liberty. I am not to be convicted save alone By mine own word or writing. If these men Have written toward the queen my sister's hurt Aught, I wist naught of all such writ at all: Let them be put to punishment; I am sure, Were these here present, they by testi- mony Would bring me clear of blame. <i>Gawdy.</i> Yet by their mean They could not in excuse of you deny That letters of communion to and fro Have passed between you and the Span- iard, whence What should have come on England and the queen These both well know, and with what messages Were English exiles entertained of you By mean of these men, of your secre- taries, Confirmed and cherished in conspiracy For this her kingdom's overthrow: in France Paget and Morgan, traitors in design Of one close mind with you, and in your name Cheered hence for constant service. <i>Mary Stuart.</i> That I sought Comfort and furtherance of all Catho- lic states, By what mean found soever just and good, Your mistress from myself had note long since And open warning: uncompelled I made Avowal of such my righteous purpose, nor In aught may disavow it. Of these late plots</p>	<p>No proof is here to attain mine inno- cence, Who dare all proof against me: Babing- ton I know not of, nor Ballard, nor their works; But kings my kinsmen, powers that serve the Church, These I confess my comforters, in hope I held fast of their alliance. Yet again I challenge in the witness of my words The notes writ of these letters here alleged In mine own hand: if these ye bring not forth, Judge all good men if I be not con- demned In all your hearts already, who per- chance, For all this pageant held of lawless law, Have bound yourselves by pledge to speak me dead. But I would have you look into your souls, Remembering how the theatre of the world Is wider, in whose eye ye are judged that judge, Than this one realm of England. <i>Burghley.</i> Toward that realm Suffice it here that, madam, you stand charged With deadly purpose: being of proven intent To have your son conveyed to Spain, and give The title you pretend upon our crown Up with his wardship to King Philip. <i>Mary Stuart.</i> Nay, I have no kingdom left to assign, nor crown Whereof to make conveyance: yet is this But lawful, that of all things which are mine I may dispose at pleasure, and to none Stand on such count accountable. <i>Burghley.</i> So be it So far as may be; but your ciphers sent By Curle's plain testimony to Babing- ton,</p>
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To the lord Lodovic, and to Fernihurst,
Once provost on your part in Edinburgh,
By mean of Grange your friend his
father-in-law,
Speak not but as with tongue imperial,
nor
Of import less than kingdoms.

Mary Stuart. Surely, sir,
Such have I writ, and many; nor there-
in
Beyond my birth have trespassed, to
commend
That lord you speak of, and another,
both

My friends in faith, to a cardinal's digni-
ty,
And that, I trust, without offence:
except

It be not held as lawful on my part
To commune with the chiefest of my
creed

By written word on matters of mine own
As for your queen with churchfolk of
her kind.

Burghley. Well were it, madam, that
with some of yours
You had held less close communion:
since by proof

Reiterated from those your secretaries
It seems you know right well that Mor-
gan who

Sent Parry privily to despatch the queen,
And have assigned him annual pension.

Mary Stuart. This
I know not, whether or no your charge
be truth;
But I do know this Morgan hath lost
all

For my sake, and in honor sure I am
That rather to relieve him I stand
bound,

Than to revenge an injury done your
queen

By one that lives my friend, and hath
deserved

Well at mine hands: yet, being not
bound to this,

I did affright the man from such
attempts

Of crimes against her, who contrariwise
Hath out of England openly assigned
Pensions to Gray my traitor, and the
Scots

Mine adversaries, as also to my son,
To hire him to forsake me.

Burghley. Nay, but seeing
By negligence of them that steered the
state

The revenues of Scotland sore impaired,
Somewhat in bounty did her grace
bestow

Upon your son the king, her kinsman:
whom

She would not, being to her so near of
blood,

Forget from charity. No such help it
was,

Nor no such honest service, that your
friends

Designed you, who by letters hither
writ

To Paget and Mendoza sent as here
Large proffers of strange aid from over-
sea

To right you by her ruin.

Mary Stuart. Here was naught
Aimed for your queen's destruction:
nor is this

Against me to be charged, that foreign
friends

Should labor for my liberty. Thus
much

At sundry times I have signified aloud
By open message to her, that I would
still

Seek mine own freedom. Who shall
bar me this?

Who tax me with unreason, that I sent
Unjust conditions on my part to be
To her propounded, which now many
times

Have always found rejection? yea, when
even

For hostages I proffered in my stead
To be delivered up with mine own
son

The Duke of Guise's, both to stand in
pledge

That nor your queen nor kingdom
should through me

Take aught of damage; so that hence
by proof

I see myself utterly from all hope
Already barred of freedom. But I now
Am dealt with most unworthily, whose
fame

And honorable repute are called in
doubt
Before such foreign men of law as may
By miserable conclusions of their craft
Draw every thin and shallow circum-
stance
Out into compass of a consequence:
Whereas the anointed heads and con-
secrate
Of princes are not subject to such laws
As private men are. Next, whereas ye
are given
Authority but to look such matters
through
As tend to the hurt of your queen's
person, yet
Here is the cause so handled, and so
far
Here are my letters wrested, that the
faith
Which I profess, the immunity and
state
Of foreign princes, and their private
right
Of mutual speech by word reciprocate
From royal hand to royal, all in one
Are called in question, and myself by
force
Brought down beneath my kingly
dignity,
And made to appear before a judg-
ment-seat
As one held guilty; to none end but this,
all to none other purpose, but that I
Might from all natural favor of the
queen
Be quite excluded, and my right cut
off
From claim hereditary: whereas I
stand
Here of mine own good-will to clear
myself
Of all objected to me, lest I seem
To have aught neglected in the full
defence
Of mine own innocency and honor.
This
Would I bring likewise in your minds,
how once
This queen herself of yours, Elizabeth,
Was drawn in question of conspiracy
That Wyatt raised against her sister,
yet

Ye know she was most innocent. For
me,
With very heart's religion I affirm,
Though I desire the Catholics here
might stand
Assured of safety, this I would not yet
Buy with the blood and death of any
one.
And on mine own part rather would I
play
Esther than Judith; for the people's
sake
To God make intercession, than deprive
The meanest of the people born of
life.
Mine enemies have made broad repor'
aloud
That I was irreligious: yet the time
Has been, I would have learnt the faith
ye hold,
But none would suffer me, for all I
sought,
To find such teaching at your teachers
hands;
As though they cared not what my soul
became.
And now at last, when all ye can ye
have done
Against me, and have barred me from
my right,
Ye may chance fail yet of your cause
and hope.
To God and to the princes of my kin
I make again appeal, from you again
Record my protestation, and reject
All judgment of your court: I had
rather die
Thus undishonored, even a thousand
deaths,
Than so bring down the height of
majesty;
Yea, and thereby confess myself as
bound
By all the laws of England, even in
faith
Of things religious, who could never
learn
What manner of laws these were: I am
destitute
Of counsellors, and who shall be my
peers
To judge my cause through, and give
doom thereon,

I am ignorant wholly, being an absolute
queen,
 And will do naught which may impair
 that state
 In me nor other princes, nor my son;
 Since yet my mind is not dejected, nor
 Will I sink under my calamity.
 My notes are taken from me, and no
 man
 Dates but step forth to be my advocate.
 I am clear from all crime done against
 the queen,
 I have strid not up one man against
 her; yet,
 All of many dangers overpast
 I have thoroughly forewarned her, still
 I found
 No credit, but have always been con-
 temned,
 Though nearest to her in blood allied.
 When late
 Ye made association, and thereon
 An act against their lives on whose
 behalf,
 Though innocent even as ignorance of
 it, ought
 Might be contrived to endangering of
 the queen
 From foreign force abroad, or privy
 plots
 At home of close rebellion, I foresaw
 That, whatsoever of peril so might rise
 Of more than all this for religion's
 sake,
 My most mortal enemies in her court
 should lay upon me all the charge,
 as I
 But the whole Name of all men
 I will not take it hardly, nor without
 Will I not own, and I not know
 I will not own, and I not know

For all most reasonable conditions
 made
 Or proffered to redeem my liberty
 Found audience or acceptance; and at
 last
 Here am I set with none to plead for
 me.
 But this I pray, that on this matter of
 mine
 Another meeting there be kept, and I
 Be granted on my part an advocate
 To hold my cause up; or that, seeing
 ye know
 I am a princess, I may be believed
 By mine own word, being princely: for
 should I
 Stand to your judgment, who most
 plainly I see
 Are armed against me strong in preju-
 dice,
 It were mine extreme folly: more than
 this,
 That ever I came to England in such
 trust
 As of the plighted friendship of your
 queen,
 And comfort of her promise. Look,
 my lords,
 Here on this ring: her pledge of love
 was this,
 And surety, sent me when I lay in
 bonds
 Of mine own rebels once; regard it
 well;
 In trust of this I came amongst you:
 none
 But sees what faith I have found to
 keep this trust.
Sagely. Whereas I hear a certain
 person being
 Commissioner first, then counsellor in
 this cause,
 From me as from the queen's commis-
 sioner here
 Know ye a new word that Your great
 grace
 To me or to any and a translation of
 the be de vered you. To us a great
 what the queen's hand our authority,
 whence
 To be known, the great being written
 of the great seal of England, and

With prejudice come hither, but to judge	It may not be admitted, for just cause Which I will elsewhere allege. Men's minds
By the straight rule of justice. On their part,	Are with affections diversly distraught And borne about of passion: nor would these
These the queen's learned counsel here in place	Have ever avowed such things against me, save
Do level at nothing else but that the truth	For their own hope and profit. Letters may
May come to light, how far you have made offence	Toward other hands be outwardly ad- dressed
Against the person of the queen. To us	Than they were writ for: yea, and many times
Full power is given to hear and dili- gently	Have many things been privily slipped in mine
Examine all the matter, though your- self	Which from my tongue came never. Were I not
Were absent: yet for this did we desire	Reft of my papers, and my secre- tary
To have your presence here, lest we might seem	Kept from me, better might I then confute
To have derogated from your honor; nor	These things cast up against me. <i>Burghley</i> . But there shall
Designed to object against you any thing	Be nothing brought against you save what last
But what you knew of, or took part therein,	Stands charged, even since the nine- teenth day of June:
Against the queen's life bent. For this were these	Nor would your papers here avail you, seeing
Your letters brought in question, but to unfold	Your secretaries, and Babington him- self,
Your aim against her person, and therewith	Being of the rack unquestioned, have affirmed
All matters to it belonging; which per- force	You sent those letters to him; which though yourself
Are so with other matters interlaced As none may sever them. Hence was there need	Deny, yet whether more belief should here
Set all these forth, not parcels here and there,	On affirmation or negation hang Let the commissioners judge. But, to come back,
Whose circumstances do the assurance give	This next I tell you as a counsellor, Time after time you have put forth many things
Upon what points you dealt with Bab- ington.	Propounded for your freedom; that all these
<i>Mary Stuart</i> . The circumstances haply may find proof,	Have fallen all profitless, 'tis long of you,
But the fact never. Mine integrity Nor on the memory nor the credit hangs	And of the Scots; in no wise of the queen.
Of these my secretaries, albeit I know They are men of honest hearts: yet if they have	For first the lords of Scotland, being required,
Confessed in fear of torture any thing, Or hope of guerdon and impunity,	Flatly resused, to render up the king

Burghley. Hereon stands proof apparent of that charge
Which you but now put by, that you design
To give your right supposed upon this realm
Into the Spaniard's hold; and on that cause
Lie now at Rome Allen and Parsons, men
Your servants and our traitors.
Mary Stuart. No such proof
Lives but by witness of revolted men,
My traitors and your helpers; who to me
Have broken their allegiance bound by oath.
When, being a prisoner clothed about with cares,
I languished out of hope of liberty,
Nor yet saw hope to effect of those things aught
Which many and many looked for at my hands,
Declining now through age and sickness, this
To some seemed good, even for religion's sake,
That the succession here of the English crown
Should or be established in the Spanish king
Or in some English Catholic. And a book
Was sent to me to avow the Spaniard's claim;
Which being of me allowed not, some there were
In whose displeasure thence I fell; but now
Seeing all my hope in England desperate grown,
I am fully minded to reject no aid
Abroad, but resolute to receive it.
Walsingham. Sirs,
Bethink you, were the kingdom so conveyed,
What should become of you and all of yours,
Estates and honors and posterities,
Being to such hands delivered.
Burghley. Nay, but these
In no such wise can be conveyed away

By personal will, but by successive right
Still must descend in heritage of law.
Whereto your own words witness, saying if this
Were blown abroad your cause were utterly
Lost in all hearts of English friends.
Therein
Your thoughts hit right: for here in all men's minds
That are not mad with envying at the truth,
Death were no loathlier than a stranger king.
If you would any more, speak: if not aught,
This cause is ended.
Mary Stuart. I require again
Before a full and open parliament
Hearing, or speech in person with the queen,
Who shall, I hope, have of a queen regard,
And with the council. So, in trust hereof,
I crave a word with some of you apart,
And of this main assembly take farewell.

ACT. IV. — ELIZABETH.

SCENE I. — RICHMOND.

WALSINGHAM and DAVISON.

Walsingham. It is God's wrath, too sure, that holds her hand;
His plague upon this people, to preserve
By her sole mean her deadliest enemy, known
By proof more potent than approof of law
In all points guilty, but on more than all
Toward all this country dangerous. To take off
From the court held last month at Fotheringay
Authority with so full commission given
To pass upon her judgment — suddenly
Cut short by message of some three lines writ

With hurrying hand at midnight, and despatched
 To main its work upon the second day, —
 What else may this be in so wise a queen
 But madness, as a brand to sear the brain
 Of one by God infatuate? yea, and now
 That she receives the French ambassador
 With one more special envoy from his king,
 Except their message touch her spleen with fire,
 And so undo itself, we cannot tell
 What doubt may work upon her. Had we but
 Some sign more evident of some private seal
 Confirming toward her by more personal proof
 The Scottish queen's inveteracy, for this
 As for our country plucked from imminent death
 We might thank God; but with such gracious words
 Of piteous challenge and imperial plea
 She hath wrought by letter on our mistress' mind,
 We may not think her judgment so could slip,
 Borne down with passion or forgetfulness,
 As to leave bare her bitter root of heart
 And core of evil will there laboring.
Davison. Yet
 I see no shade of other surety cast
 From any sign of likelihood. It were
 Not shameful more than dangerous, though she bade,
 To have her prisoner privily made away;
 Yet stands the queen's heart well-nigh fixed hereon
 When aught may seem to fix it; then as fast
 Wavers, but veers to that bad point again

Whence blowing the wind blows down her honor, nor
 Brings surety of life with fame's destruction.
Walsingham. Ay,
 We are no Catholic keepers, and his charge
 Need fear no poison in our watch-dog's fang,
 Though he show honest teeth at her, to threat
 Thieves' hands with loyal danger.
Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, *attended by* BURGHLEY, LEICESTER, HUNSDON, HATTON, *and others of the Council.*
Elizabeth. No, my lords,
 We are not so weak of wit as men that need
 Be counselled of their enemies. Blame us not
 That we accuse your friendship on this cause
 Of too much fearfulness: France we will hear;
 Nor doubt but France shall hear us all as loud
 As friend or foe may threaten or protest,
 Of our own heart advised, and resolute more
 Than hearts that need men's counsel. Bid them in.
Enter CHÂTEAUNEUF *and* BELLÈVRE, *attended.*
 From our fair cousin of France what message, sirs?
Bellèvre. I, madam, have in special charge to lay
 The king's mind open to your majesty, Which gives my tongue first leave of speech more free
 Than from a common envoy. Sure it is,
 No man more grieves at what his heart abhors,
 The counsels of your highness' enemies,
 Than doth the king of France: wherein how far
 The queen your prisoner have borne part, or may
 Seem of their works partaker, he can judge

Naught: but much less the king may understand
 What men may stand accusers, who rise up
 Judge in so great a matter. Men of law
 May lay their charges on a subject: but
 The queen of Scotland, dowager queen
 of France,
 And sister made by wedlock to the king,
 To none being subject, can be judged
 of none
 Without such violence done on rule as
 breaks
 Prerogative of princes. Nor may man
 That looks upon your present majesty
 In such clear wise apparent, and retains
 Remembrance of your name through all
 the world
 For virtuous wisdom, bring his mind to
 think
 That England's royal-souled Elizabeth,
 Being set so high in fame, can so forget
 Wise Plato's word, that common souls
 are wrought
 Out of dull iron and slow lead, but
 kings
 Of gold untempered with so vile alloy
 As makes all metal up of meaner men
 But say this were not thus, and all men's
 awe
 Were from all time toward kingship
 merely vain,
 And state no more worth reverence, yet
 the plea
 Were naught which here your ministers
 pretend,
 That while the queen of Scots lives you
 may live
 No day that knows not danger. Were
 she dead,
 Rather might then your peril wax indeed
 To shape and sense of heavier portent,
 whom
 The Catholic states now threat not, nor
 your land,
 For this queen's love, but rather for
 their faith's,
 Whose cause, were she by violent hand
 removed,
 Could be but furthered, and its enter-
 prise
 Put on more strong and prosperous pre-
 text; yea,
 You shall but draw the invasion on this
 land
 Whose threat you so may think to stay,
 and bring
 Imminence down of inroad. Thus far
 forth
 The queen of Scots hath for your person
 been
 Even as a targe or buckler which has
 caught
 All intercepted shafts against your
 state
 Shot, or a stone held fast within your
 hand,
 Which, if you cast it thence in fear or
 wrath
 To smite your adversary, is cast away,
 And no mean left therein for menace.
 If
 You lay but hand upon her life, albeit
 There were that counselled this, her
 death will make
 Your enemies weapons of their own
 despair
 And give their whetted wrath excuse and
 edge
 More plausibly to strike more peril-
 ously.
 Your grace is known for strong in fore-
 sight; we
 These nineteen years of your wise reign
 have kept
 Fast watch in France upon you: of
 those claims
 Which lineally this queen here prisoner
 may
 Put forth on your succession have you
 made
 The stoutest rampire of your rule: and
 this
 Is grown a by-word with us, that their
 cause
 Who shift the base whereon their poli-
 cies lean
 Bows down toward ruin: and of loyal
 heart
 This will I tell you, madam, which hath
 been
 Given me for truth assured of one whose
 place
 Affirms him honorable, how openly
 A certain prince's minister that well
 May stand in your suspicion says abroad

That for his master's greatness it were good
 The queen of Scots were lost already, seeing
 He is well assured the Catholics here should then
 All wholly range them on his master's part.
 Thus long hath reigned your highness happily,
 Who have loved fair temperance more than violence: now,
 While honor bids have mercy, wisdom holds
 Equal at least the scales of interest. Think
 What name shall yours be found in time far hence,
 Even as you deal with her that in your hand
 Lies not more subject than your fame to come
 In men's repute that shall be. Bid her live,
 And ever shall my lord stand bound to you,
 And you forever firm in praise of men.
Elisabeth. I am sorry, sir, you are hither come from France
 Upon no better errand. I appeal
 To God for judge between my cause and hers
 Whom here you stand for. In this realm of mine
 The queen of Scots sought shelter, and therein
 Hath never found but kindness; for which grace
 In recompense she hath three times sought my life.
 No grief that on this head yet ever fell
 Shook ever from mine eyes so many a tear
 As this last plot upon it. I have read
 As deep, I doubt me, in as many books
 As any queen or prince in Christendom,
 Yet never chanced on aught so strange and sad
 As this my state's calamity. Mine own life
 Is by mere nature precious to myself,
 And in mine own realm I can live not safe.

I am a poor lone woman, girt about
 With secret enemies that perpetually
 Lay wait for me to kill me. From your king
 Why have not I my traitor to my hands
 Delivered up, who now this second time
 Hath sought to slay me, Morgan? On my part,
 Had mine own cousin Hunsdon here conspired
 Against the French king's life, he had found not so
 Refuge of me, nor even for kindred's sake
 From the edge of law protection; and this cause
 Needs present evidence of this man's mouth.
Bellivore. Madam, there stand against the queen of Scots
 Already here in England on this charge
 So many and they so dangerous witnesses,
 No need can be to bring one over more:
 Nor can the king show such unnatural heart
 As to send hither a knife for enemies' hands
 To cut his sister's throat. Most earnestly
 My lord expects your resolution; which
 If we receive as given against his plea,
 I must crave leave to part for Paris hence.
 Yet give me pardon first if yet once more
 I pray your highness be assured, and so
 Take heed in season, you shall find this queen
 More dangerous dead than living. Spare her life,
 And not my lord alone, but all that reign,
 Shall be your sureties in all Christian lands
 Against all scathe of all conspiracies
 Made on her party; while such remedies' ends
 As physic states with bloodshedding, to cure
 Danger by death, bring fresh calamities

Far oftener forth than the old are healed
of them
Which so men thought to medicine. To
refrain
From that red-handed way of rule, and
set
Justice no higher than mercy sits beside,
Is the first mean of kings' prosperity
That would reign long; nor will my lord
believe
Your highness could put off yourself so
much
As to reverse and tread upon the law
That you thus long have kept and hon-
orably:
But should this perilous purpose hold
right on,
I am bounden by my charge to say, the
king
Will not regard as liable to your laws
A queen's imperial person, nor will hold
Her death as but the general wrong of
kings,
And no more his than as his brethren's
all,
But as his own and special injury done,
More than to these injurious.
Elisabeth. Doth your lord
Bid you speak thus?
Bellivère. Ay, madam: from his
mouth
Had I command what speech to use.
Elisabeth. You have done
Better to speak than he to send it. Sir,
You shall not presently depart this land
As one denied of mere discourtesy.
I will return an envoy of mine own
To speak for me at Paris with the king.
You shall bear back a letter from my
hand,
And give your lord assurance, having
seen,
I cannot be so frightened with men's
threats
That they shall not much rather move
my mind
To quicken than to slack the righteous
doom
Which none must think by menace to
put back,
Or daunt it with defiance. Sirs, good
day. [*Exeunt Ambassadors.*]
I were as one belated with false lights

If I should think to steer my darkglin-
way
By twilight furtherance of their wiles
and words.
Think you, my lords, France yet would
have her live?
Burghley. If there be other than the
apparent end
Hid in this mission to your majesty,
Mine envoys can by no means fathom
it,
Who deal for me at Paris: fear of
Spain
Lays double hand as 'twere upon the
king,
Lest by removal of the queen of Scots
A way be made for peril in the claim
More potent then of Philip; and if
there come
From his Farnese note of enterprise
Or danger this way tending, France will
yet
Cleave to your friendship though his
sister die.
Elisabeth. So, in your mind, this half-
souled brother would
Steer any way that might keep safe his
sail
Against a southern wind, which here,
he thinks,
Her death might strengthen from the
north again
To blow against him off our subject
straits,
Made servile then and Spanish? Yet
perchance
There swells behind our seas a heart
too high
To bow more easily down, and bring
this land
More humbly to such handling, than
their waves
Bow down to ships of strangers, or their
storms
To breath of any lord on earth but God.
What thinks our cousin?
Hunsdon. That if Spain or France
Or both be stronger than the heart in
us
Which beats to battle ere they menace,
why,
In God's name, let them rise and make
their prey

Of what was England; but if neither
be,—

The smooth-cheeked French man-har-
lot, nor that hand

Which help to light Rome's fires with
English limbs,—

Let us not keep, to make their weakness
strong,

A pestilence here alive in England,
which

Gives force to their faint enmities, and
burns

Half the heartout of loyal trust and hope
With heat that kindles treason.

Elisabeth. By this light,
I have heard worse counsel from a wise
man's tongue

Than this clear note of forthright sol-
diership.

How say you, Dudley, to it?

Leicester. Madam, ere this
You have had my mind upon the matter,
writ

But late from Holland, that no public
stroke

Should fall upon this princess, who may
be

By privy death more happily removed
Without impeach of majesty, nor leave
A sign against your judgment, to call
down

Blame of strange kings for wrong to
kingship wrought

Though right were done to justice.

Elisabeth. Of your love
We know it is that comes this counsel;
nor,

Had we such friends of all our servants,
need

Our mind be now distraught with dan-
gerous doubts

That find no screen from dangers. Yet
meseems

One doubt stands now removed, if doubt
there were

Of aught from Scotland ever: *Walsing-
ham,*

You should have there intelligence
whereof

To make these lords with us partakers.

Walsingham. Nay,
Madam, no more than from a trustless
hand

Protest and promise: of those twain
that come

Hot on these Frenchmen's heels in
embassy,

He that in counsel on this cause was
late

One with my lord of Leicester now, to
rid

By draught of secret death this queen
away,

Bears charge to say as these gone hence
have said

In open audience, but by personal note
Hath given me this to know, that how-
soe'er

His king indeed desire her life be spared,
Much may be wrought upon him, would
your grace

More richly line his ragged wants with
gold,

And by full utterance of your parlia-
ment

Approve him heir in England.

Elisabeth. Ay! no more?
God's blood! what grace is proffered us
at need,

And on what mild conditions! Say I
will not

Redeem such perils at so dear a price,
Shall not our pensioner too join hands
with France,

And pay my gold with iron barter back
At edge of sword he dares not look
upon,

They tell us, for the scathe and scare he
took

Even in this woman's womb when shot
and steel

Undid the manhood in his veins unborn,
And left his tongue's threats hand-
less?

Walsingham. Men there be,
Your majesty must think, who bear but
ill,

For pride of country and high-hearted-
ness,

To see the king they serve your servant
so

That not his mother's life and once their
queen's

Being at such point of peril can enforce
One warlike word of his, for chance of
war

Conditional against you. Word came late
 From Edinburgh, that there the citizens
 With hoot and hiss had bayed him
 through the streets
 As he went heartless by; of whom they
 had heard
 This published saying, that in his personal
 mind
 The blood of kindred or affinity
 So much not binds us as the friendship
 pledged
 To them that are not of our blood: and
 this
 Stands clear for certain, that no breath
 of war
 Shall breathe from him against us
 though she die,
 Except his titular claim be reft from him
 On our succession; and that all his
 mind
 Is but to reign unpartnered with a
 power
 Which should weigh down that half his
 kingdom's weight
 Left to his hand's share nominally in
 hold.
 And for his mother, this would he
 desire,
 That she were kept from this day to her
 death
 Close prisoner in one chamber, never
 more
 To speak with man or woman; and
 hereon
 That proclamation should be made of
 her
 As of one subject formally declared
 To the English law whereby, if she
 offend
 Again with iterance of conspiracy,
 She shall not as a queen again be tried,
 But as your vassal and a private head
 Live liable to the doom and stroke of
 death.
Elizabeth. She is bounden to him as
 he long since to her,
 Who would have given his kingdom up
 at least
 To his dead father's slayer; in whose
 red hand
 How safe had lain his life too, doubt
 may guess,

Which yet kept dark her purpose then
 on him,
 Dark now no more to us-ward. Think
 you then
 That they belie him, whose suspicion
 saith
 His ear and heart are yet inclined to
 Spain,
 If from that brother-in-law that was
 of ours,
 And would have been our bridegroom,
 he may win
 Help of strange gold and foreign sol-
 diership,
 With Scottish furtherance of those
 Catholic lords
 Who are stronger-spirited in their faith
 than ours,
 Being harried more of heretics, as they
 say,
 Than these within our borders, to root
 out
 The creed there established now, and do
 to death
 Its ministers, with all the lords their
 friends,
 Lay hands on all strong places there,
 and rule
 As prince upon their party? since he
 fain
 From ours would be divided, and cast
 in
 His lot with Rome against us too, from
 these
 Might he but earn assurance of their
 faith,
 Revolting from his own. May these
 things be
 More than mere muttering breath of
 trustless lies,
 And half his heart yet hover toward our
 side
 For all such hope or purpose?
Walsingham. Of his heart
 We know not, madam, surely; nor
 doth he
 Who follows fast on their first envoy
 sent,
 And writes to excuse him of his mes-
 sage here
 On her behalf apparent, but in sooth
 Aimed otherwise; the Master I mean
 of Gray,

<p>Who swears me here by letter, if he be not True to the queen of England, he is content To have his head fall on a scaffold: saying, To put from him this charge of em- bassy Had been his ruin, but the meaning of it Is modest and not menacing; whereto If you will yield not yet to spare the life So near its forfeit now, he thinks it well You should be pleased by some com- mission given To stay by the way his comrade and himself, Or bid them back. <i>Elizabeth.</i> What man is this, then, sent With such a knave to fellow? <i>Walsingham.</i> No such knave, But still your prisoner's friend of old time found,— Sir Robert Melville. <i>Elizabeth.</i> And an honest man As faith might wish her servants; but what pledge Will these produce me for security That I may spare this dangerous life, and live Unscathed of after practice? <i>Walsingham.</i> As I think, The king's self and his whole nobility Will be her personal pledges; and her son, If England yield her to his hand in charge, On no less strait a bond will undertake For her safe keeping. <i>Elizabeth.</i> That were even to arm With double power mine adversary, and make him The stronger by my hand to do me hurt— Were he mine adversary indeed: which yet I will not hold him. Let them find a mean For me to live unhurt, and save her life,</p>	<p>It shall well please me. Say this king of Scots Himself would give his own inheritance up Pretended in succession, if but once Her hand were found, or any friend's of hers, Again put forth upon me for her sake, Why, haply so might hearts be satisfied Of lords and commons then to let her live. But this I doubt he had rather take her life Himself than yield up to us for pledge; and less, These men shall know of me, I will not take In price of her redemption: which were else, And haply may in no wise not be held, To this my loyal land and mine own trust A deadlier stroke and blast of sound more dire Than noise of fleets invasive. <i>Walsingham.</i> Surely so Would all hearts hold it, madam, in that land That are not enemies of the land and yours; For ere the doom had been proclaimed an hour Which gave to death your main foe's head and theirs, Yourself have heard what fire of joy brake forth From all your people; how their church-towers all Rang in with jubilant acclaim of bells The day that bore such tidings, and the night That laughed aloud with lightning of their joy And thundered round its triumph twice twelve hours This tempest of thanksgiving roared and shone Sheer from the Solway's to the Chan- nel's foam With light as from one festal-flaming hearth And sound as of one trumpet; not a tongue</p>
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But praised God for it, or heart that
 leapt not up,
 Save of your traitors and their coun-
 try's: these
 Withered at heart and shrank their
 heads in close,
 As though the bright sun's were a bas-
 ilisk's eye,
 And light, that gave all others comfort,
 flame
 And smoke to theirs of hell's own dark-
 ness, whence
 Such eyes were blinded or put out with
 fire.
Elisabeth. Yea, I myself, I mind me,
 might not sleep
 Those twice twelve hours thou speak'st
 of. By God's light,
 Be it most in love of me or fear of her
 I know not, but my people seems in
 sooth
 Hot and an hungered on this trail of
 hers:
 Nor is it a people bloody-minded, used
 To lap the life up of an enemy's vein
 Who bleeds to death unweaponed: our
 good hounds
 Will course a quarry soldier-like in war,
 But rage not hangman-like upon the
 prey,
 To flesh their fangs on limbs that strive
 not: yet
 Their hearts are hotter on this course
 than mine,
 Which most was deadliest aimed at.
Walsingham. Even for that
 How should not theirs be hot as fire
 from hell
 To burn your danger up, and slay that
 soul
 Alive that seeks it? Thinks your maj-
 esty
 There beats a heart where treason hath
 not turned
 All English blood to poison, which
 would feel
 No deadlier pang of dread more death-
 ful to it
 To hear of yours endangered than to
 feel
 A sword against its own life bent, or
 know
 Death imminent as darkness overhead

That takes the noon from one man's
 darkening eye
 As must your death from all this peo-
 ple's? You
 Are very England: in your light of life
 This living land of yours walks only
 safe,
 And all this breathing people with your
 breath
 Breathes unenslaved, and draws at each
 pulse in
 Freedom: your eye is light of theirs,
 your word
 As God's to comfort England, whose
 whole soul
 Is made with yours one, and her wit-
 ness you
 That Rome or hell shall take not hold
 on her
 Again till God be wroth with us so
 much
 As to reclaim for heaven the star that
 yet
 Lights all your land that looks on it,
 and gives
 Assurance higher than danger dares
 assail
 Save in this lady's name and service,
 who
 Must now from you take judgment.
Elisabeth. Must! by God,
 I know not *must* but as a word of mine,
 My tongue's and not mine ear's famil-
 iar. Sirs,
 Content yourselves to know this much
 of us,
 Or having known remember, that we
 sent
 The lord of Buckhurst and our servant
 Beale
 To acquaint this queen our prisoner
 with the doom
 Confirmed on second trial against her;
 saying
 Her word can weigh not down the
 weightier guilt
 Approved upon her, and by parliament
 Since fortified with sentence. Yea,
 my lords,
 Ye should forget not how by message
 then
 I bade her know of me with what
 strong force

Of strenuous and invincible argument
I am urged to hold no more in such
delay

The process of her execution, being
The seed-plot of these late conspiracies,
Their author and chief motive; and am
told

That if I yield not, mine the guilt must
be

In God's and in the whole world's suf-
fering sight

Of all the miseries and calamities
To ensue on my refusal: whence, albeit
I know not yet how God shall please to
incline

My heart on that behalf, I have thought
it meet

In conscience yet that she should be
forewarned,

That so she might bethink her of her
sins

Done both toward God offensive and
to me,

And pray for grace to be true penitent
For all these faults: which, had the
main fault reached

No farther than mine own poor person,
God

Stands witness with what truth my heart
protests

I freely would have pardoned. She to
this

Makes bitter answer as of desperate
heart,

All we may wreak our worst upon her;
whom

Having to death condemned, we may
fulfil

Our wicked work, and God in paradise
With just atonement shall requite her.

This
Ye see is all the pardon she will ask,
Being only, and even as 'twere with
prayer, desired

To crave of us forgiveness; and there-
on

Being by Lord Buckhurst charged on
this point home,

That by her mean the Catholics here
had learnt

To hold her for their sovereign, — on
which cause

Nor my religion nor myself might live

Uncharged with danger while her life
should last, —

She answering gives God thanks aloud
to be

Held of so great account upon his side,
And in God's cause and in the Church
of God's

Rejoicingly makes offering of her life;
Which I, God knows how unrejoicingly,
Can scarce, ye tell me, choose but take,
or yield

At least for you to take it. Yet, being
told

It is not for religion she must die,
But for a plot by compass of 'her own
Laid to dethrone me and destroy, she
casts

Again this answer barbed with mockery
back, —

She was not so presumptuous born, to
aspire

To two such ends yet ever: yea, so far
She dwelt from such desire removed in
heart,

She would not have me suffer by her
will

The fillip of a finger; though herself
Be persecuted even as David once,
And her mishap be that she cannot so
Fly by the window forth as David:
whence

It seems she likens us to Saul, and looks
Haply to see us as on Mount Gilboa
fallen,

Where yet, for all the shooters on her
side,

Our shield shall be not vilely cast away,
As of one unanointed. Yet, my lords,
If England might but by my death
attain

A state more flourishing with a better
prince,

Gladly would I lay down my life; who
have

No care save only for my people's sake
To keep it: for myself, in all the world
I see no great cause why for all this coil
I should be fond to live or fear to die.

If I should say unto you that I mean
To grant not your petition, by my faith,

More should I so say haply than I mean:
Or should I say I mean to grant it, this
Were, as I think, to tell you of my mind

More than is fit for you to know: and thus
 I must for all petitionary prayer
 Deliver you an answer answerless.
 Yet will I pray God lighten my dark
 mind,
 That being illumined it may thence fore-
 see
 What for his church and all this com-
 monwealth
 May most be profitable: and this once
 known,
 My hand shall halt not long behind his
 will.

SCENE II. — FOTHERINGAY

SIR AMYAS PAULET and SIR DREW
 DRURY.

Paulet. I never gave God heartier
 thanks than these
 I give to have you partner of my charge
 Now most of all, these letters being to
 you
 No less designed than me, and you in
 heart
 One with mine own upon them. Cer-
 tainly,
 When I put hand to pen this morning
 past,
 That master Davison by mine evidence
 Might note what sore disquietudes I
 had
 To increase my griefs before of body
 and mind,
 I looked for no such word to cut off
 mine
 As these to us both of Walsingham's
 and his.
 Would rather yet I had cause to still
 complain
 Of those unanswered letters two months
 past,
 Than thus be certified of such intents
 As God best knoweth I never sought to
 know,
 Or search out secret causes: though to
 hear
 Nothing at all did breed, as I confessed,
 In me some hard conceits against my-
 self,
 I had rather yet rest ignorant than
 ashamed

Of such ungracious knowledge. This
 shall be
 Fruit as I think of dread wrought on the
 queen
 By those seditious rumors whose report
 Blows fear among the people lest our
 charge
 Escape our trust, or, as they term it now,
 Be taken away, — such apprehensive
 tongues
 So phrase it, — and her freedom strike
 men's hearts
 More deep than all these flying fears
 that say
 London is fired of Papists, or the Scots
 Have crossed in arms the Border, or
 the north
 Is risen again rebellious, or the Guise
 Is disembarked in Sussex, or that now
 In Milford Haven rides a Spanish
 fleet, —
 All which, albeit but footless floating
 lies,
 May all too easily smite and work too
 far
 Even on the heart most royal in the
 world
 That ever was a woman's.
Drury. Good my friend,
 These noises come without a thunder-
 bolt
 In such dense air of dusk expectancy
 As all this land lies under; nor will
 some
 Doubt or think much to say of those
 reports,
 They are broached and vented of men's
 credulous mouths
 Whose ears have caught them from such
 lips as meant
 Merely to strike more terror in the
 queen,
 And wring that warrant from her hover-
 ing hand
 Which falters yet and flutters on her lip
 While the hand hangs and trembles
 half advanced
 Upon that sentence which, the treas-
 urer said,
 Should well ere this have spoken, see
 ing it was
 More than a full month old and four
 days more

<p>When he so looked to hear the word of it Which yet lies sealed of silence. <i>Paulet.</i> Will you say, Or any as wise and loyal, say or think, It was but for a show, to scare men's wits, They have raised this hue and cry upon her flight Supposed from hence, to waken Exeter With noise from Honiton and Sampfield spread Of proclamation to detain all ships, And lay all highways for her day and night, And send like precepts out four manner of ways From town to town, to make in readi- ness Their armor and artillery, with all speed, On pain of death, for London by report Was set on fire? though, God be there- fore praised, We know this is not, yet the noise hereof Were surely not to be neglected, see- ing There is, meseems, indeed no readier way To levy forces for the achieving that Which so these lewd reporters feign to fear. <i>Drury.</i> Why, in such mighty matters and such mists Wise men may think what hardly fools would say, And eyes get glimpse of more than sight hath leave To give commission for the babbling tongue Aloud to cry they have seen. This noise that was Upon one Arden's flight, a traitor, whence Fear flew last week all round us, gave but note How lightly may men's minds take fire, and words Take wing that have no feet to fare upon More solid than a shadow. <i>Paulet.</i> Nay, he was Escaped indeed: and every day thus brings</p>	<p>Forth its new mischief; as this last month did Those treasons of the French ambas- sador Designed against our mistress, which God's grace Laid by the knave's mean bare to whom they sought For one to slay her, and of the Pope's hand earn Ten thousand blood-incrusted crowns a year To his most hellish hire. You will not say This too was merely fraud or vision wrought By fear or cloudy falsehood? <i>Drury.</i> I will say No more or surelier than I know: and this I know not thoroughly to the core of truth Or heart of falsehood in it. A man may lie Merely, or trim some bald lean truth with lies, Or patch bare falsehood with some tat- ter of truth, And each of these pass current: but of these Which likeliest may this man's tale be who gave Word of his own temptation by these French To hire them such a murderer, and avowed He held it godly cunning to comply, And bring this envoy's secretary to sight Of one clapped up for debts in New- gate, who Being thence released might readily, as he said, Even by such means as once this lady's lord Was made away with, make the queen away With powder fired beneath her bed— why, this, Good sooth, I guess not; but I doubt the man To be more liar than fool, and yet, God wot,</p>
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More fool than traitor; most of all intent
 To conjure coin forth of the Frenchman's purse
 With tricks of mere effontery: thus at least
 We know did Walsingham esteem of him:
 And if by Davison held of more account,
 Or merely found more serviceable, and made
 A mean to tether up those quick French tongues
 From threat or pleading for this prisoner's life,
 I cannot tell, and care not. Though the queen
 Hath stayed this envoy's secretary from flight
 Forth of the kingdom, and committed him
 To ward within the Tower while Châteauneuf
 Himself should come before a council held
 At my lord treasurer's, where being thus accused
 At first he cared not to confront the man,
 But stood upon his office, and the charge
 Of his king's honor and prerogative —
 Then bade bring forth the knave, who, being brought forth
 Outfaced him with insistence front to front,
 And took the record of this whole tale's truth
 Upon his soul's damnation, challenging
 The Frenchman's answer in denial hereof,
 That of his own mouth had this witness been
 Traitorously tempted, and by personal plea
 Directly drawn to treason: which awhile
 Struck dumb the ambassador as amazed with wrath,
 Till presently, the accuser being removed,
 He made avcwal this fellow some while since
 Had given his secretary to wit there lay
 One bound in Newgate who being thence released
 Would take the queen's death on his hand: whereto
 Answering, he bade the knave avoid his house
 On pain, if once their ways should cross, to be
 Sent bound before the council: who replied
 He had done foul wrong to take no further note,
 But being made privy to this damned device
 Keep close its perilous knowledge; whence the queen
 Might well complain against him; and hereon
 They fell to wrangling on this cause, that he
 Professed himself to no man answerable
 For declaration or for secret held
 Save his own master: so that now is gone
 Sir William Wade to Paris, not with charge
 To let the king there know this queen shall live,
 But to require the ambassador's recall,
 And swift delivery of our traitors there
 To present justice: yet may no man say,
 For all these half-faced scares and policies,
 Here was more sooth than seeming.
Paulet. Why, these crafts
 Were shameful then as fear's most shameful self,
 If thus your wit read them aright; and we
 Should for our souls and lives alike do ill
 To jeopard them on such men's surety given
 As make no more account of simple faith
 Than true men make of liars: and these are they,
 Our friends and masters, that rebuke us both

<p>By speech late uttered of her majesty For lack of zeal in service and of care She looked for at our hands, in that we have not In all this time, unprompted, of our- selves Found out some way to cut this queen's life off, Seeing how great peril, while her ene- my lives, She is hourly subject unto; saying, she notes, Besides a kind of lack of love to her, Herein we have not that particular care Forsooth of our own safeties, or indeed Of the faith rather and the general good, That politic reason bids; especially, Having so strong a warrant and such ground For satisfaction of our consciences To Godward, and discharge of credit kept And reputation toward the world, as is That oath whereby we stand associated To prosecute inexorably to death Both with our joint and our particular force All by whose hand and all on whose behalf Our sovereign's life is struck at: as by proof Stands charged upon our prisoner. So they write, As though the queen's own will had warranted The words that by her will's authority Were blotted from the bond, whereby that head Was doomed on whose behoof her life should be By treason threatened: for she would not have Aught pass which grieved her subjects' consciences, She said, or might abide not openly The whole world's view: nor would she any one Were punished for another's fault: and so Cut off the plea whereon she now de- sires</p>	<p>That we should dip our secret hands in blood With no direction given of her own mouth So to pursue that dangerous head to death By whose assent her life were sought: for this Stands fixed for only warrant of such deed, And this we have not, but her word instead She takes it most unkindly toward her- self That men professing toward her loyally That love that we do should in any sort, For lack of our own duty's full dis- charge, Cast upon her the burden, knowing as we Her slowness to shed blood, much more of one So near herself in blood as is this queen, And one with her in sex and quality. And these respects, they find, or so profess, Do greatly trouble her: who hath sun- dry times Protested, they assure us, earnestly, That if regard of her good subjects' risk Did not more move her than the per- sonal fear Of proper peril to her, she never would Be drawn to assent unto this blood- shedding: And so to our good judgments they refer These speeches they thought meet to acquaint us with As passed but lately from her majesty, And to God's guard commend us: which God knows We should much more need than de- serve of him Should we give ear to this, and as they bid Make heretics of these papers; which three times You see how Davison hath enforced on us:</p>
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But they shall taste no fire for me, nor
 pass
 Back to his hands till copies writ of
 them
 Lie safe in mine for sons of mine to
 keep
 In witness how their father dealt herein.
Drury. You have done the wiselier:
 and what word soe'er
 Shall bid them know your mind, I am
 well assured
 It well may speak for me too.
Paulet. Thus it shall:
 That having here his letters in my
 hands,
 I would not fail, according to his
 charge,
 To send back answer with all possible
 speed
 Which shall deliver unto him my great
 grief
 And bitterness of mind, in that I am
 So much unhappy as I hold myself
 To have lived to look on this unhappy
 day,
 When I by plain direction am required
 From my most gracious sovereign's
 mouth to do
 An act which God forbiddeth, and the
 law.
 Hers are my goods and livings, and my
 life,
 Held at her disposition, and myself
 Am ready so to lose them this next
 day
 If it shall please her so, acknowledging
 I hold them of her mere goodwill, and
 do not
 Desire them to enjoy them but so long
 As her great grace gives leave: but
 God forbid
 That I should make for any grace of
 hers
 So foul a shipwreck of my conscience,
 or
 Leave ever to my poor posterity
 So great a blot, as privily to shed blood
 With neither law nor warrant. So, in
 trust
 That she, of her accustomed clemency,
 Will take my dutiful answer in good
 part,
 By his good mediation, as returned

From one who never will be less in
 love,
 Honor, obedience, duty to his queen,
 Than any Christian subject living, thus
 To God's grace I commit him.
Drury. Though I doubt
 She haply shall be much more wroth
 hereat
 Than lately she was gracious, when she
 bade
 God treblefold reward you for your
 charge
 So well discharged, saluting you by
 name
 Most faithful and most careful, you
 shall do
 Most like a wise man loyally to write
 But such good words as these, whereto
 myself
 Subscribe in heart: though being not
 named herein
 (Albeit to both seem these late letters
 meant)
 Nor this directed to me, I forbear
 To make particular answer. And in-
 deed,
 Were danger less apparent in her life
 To the heart's life of all this living
 land,
 I would this woman might not die at
 all
 By secret stroke nor open sentence.
Paulet. I
 Will praise God's mercy most for this
 of all,
 When I shall see the murderous cause
 removed
 Of its most mortal peril: nor desire
 A guerdon ampler from the queen we
 serve,
 Besides her commendations of my faith
 For spotless actions and for safe re-
 gards,
 Than to see judgment on her enemy
 done;
 Which were for me that recompense
 indeed
 Whereof she writes as one not given
 to all,
 But for such merit reserved to crown us
 claim
 Above all common service: nor save
 this

<p>Could any treasure's promise in the world So ease those travails and rejoice this heart That hers too much takes thought of, as to read Her charge to carry for her sake in it This most just thought, that she can balance not The value that her grace doth prize me at In any weight of judgment: yet it were A word to me more comfortable at heart Than these, though these most gracious, that should speak Death to her death's contriver. <i>Drury.</i> Nay, myself Were fain to see this coil wound up, and her Removed that makes it: yet such things will pluck Hard at men's hearts that think on them, and move Compassion that such long strange years should find So strange an end: nor shall men ever say But she was born right royal; full of sins, It may be, and by circumstance or choice Dyed and defaced with bloody stains and black, Unmerciful, unfaithful, but of heart So fiery high, so swift of spirit and clear, In extreme danger and pain so lifted up, So of all violent things inviolable, So large of courage, so superb of soul, So sheathed with iron mind invincible And arms unbreached of fireproof constancy, — By shame not shaken, fear or force or death, Change, or all confluence of calamities, — And so at her worst need beloved, and still, Naked of help and honor when she seemed, As other women would be, and of hope Stripped, still so of herself adorable By minds not always all ignobly mad Nor all made poisonous with false grain of faith,</p>	<p>She shall be a world's wonder to all time, A deadly glory watched of marvelling men Not without praise, not without noble tears, And if without what she would never have Who had it never, — pity, — yet from none Quite without reverence and some kind of love For that which was so royal. Yea, and now That at her prayer we here attend on her, If, as I think, she have in mind to send Aught written to the queen, what we may do To further her desire shall on my part Gladly be done, so be it the grace she craves Be naught akin to danger. <i>Paulet.</i> It shall be The first of all, then, craved by her of man, Or by man's service done her, that was found So harmless ever. <i>Enter MARY STUART and MARY BEATON.</i> <i>Mary Stuart.</i> Sirs, in time past by I was desirous many times, ye know, To have written to your queen: but since I have had Advertisement of my conviction, seeing I may not look for life, my soul is set On preparation for another world: Yet none the less, not for desire of life, But for my conscience's discharge and rest, And for my last farewell, I have at heart By you to send her a memorial writ Of somewhat that concerns myself, when I Shall presently be gone out of this world. And to remove from her, if such be there, Suspicion of all danger in receipt Of this poor paper that shall come from me,</p>
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Myself will take the assay of it, and so
With mine own hands to yours deliver
it.

Paulet. Will you not also, madam,
be content

To seal and close it in my presence up?

Mary Stuart. Sir, willingly; but I
beseech your word

Pledged for its safe delivery to the
queen.

Paulet. I plight my faith it shall be
sent to her.

Mary Stuart. This further promise I
desire, you will

Procure me from above certificate
It hath been there delivered.

Drury. This is more

Than we may stand so pledged for: in
our power

It is to send, but far beyond our power,
As being above our place, to promise
you

Certificate or warrant.

Mary Stuart. Yet I trust

Consideration may be had of me
After my death, as one derived in blood
From your queen's grandsire, with all
mortal rites

According with that faith I have pro-
fessed

All my life-days as I was born therein.

This is the sum of all mine askings:
whence

Well might I take it in ill part of you
To wish me seal my letter in your sight,
Bewraying your hard opinion of me.

Paulet. This

Your own words well might put into my
mind,

That so beside my expectation made
Proffer to take my first assay for me
Of the outer part of it: for you must
think

I was not ignorant that by sleight of craft
There might be as great danger so con-
veyed

Within the letter as without, and thus
I could not for ill thoughts of you be
blamed,

Concurring with you in this jealousy:
For had yourself not moved it of your-
self

Sir Drew nor I had ever thought on it.

Mary Stuart. The occasion why I
moved it was but this:

That having made my custom in time
past

To send sometimes some tokens to your
queen,

At one such time that I sent certain
clothes

One standing by advised her cause my
gifts

To be tried thoroughly ere she touched
them; which

I have since observed, and taken order
thus

With Nau, when last he tarried at the
court,

To do the like to a fur-fringed counter-
pane

Which at that time I sent: and as for
this,

Look what great danger lies between
these leaves

That I dare take and handle in my
hands,

And press against my face each part of
them

Held open thus, and either deadly side,
Wherein your fear smells death sown
privily.

Paulet. Madam, when so you charged
your secretary

Her majesty was far from doubt, I
think,

Or dream of such foul dealing; and I
would

Suspicion since had found no just cause
given,

And then things had not been as now
they are.

Mary Stuart. But things are as they
are, and here I stand

Convicted, and not knowing how many
hours

I have to live yet.

Paulet. Madam, you shall live

As many hours as God shall please; but
this

May be said truly, that you here have
been

Convicted in most honorable sort

And favorable.

Mary Stuart. What favor have I
found?

Paulet. Your cause hath been examined scrupulously
By many our eldest nobles of this realm,
Whereas by law you should but have been tried

By twelve men as a common person.

Mary Stuart. Nay,
Your noblemen must by their peers be tried.

Paulet. All strangers of what quality soe'er

In matter of crime are only to be tried
In other princes' territories by law
That in that realm bears rule.

Mary Stuart. You have your laws:
But other princes all will think of it
As they see cause; and mine own son is now

No more a child, but come to man's estate,
And he will think of these things bitterly.

Drury. Ingratitude, whate'er he think of them,

Is odious in all persons, but of all
In mightiest personages most specially
Most hateful: and it will not be denied
But that the queen's grace greatly hath deserved

Both of yourself and of your son.

Mary Stuart. What boon
Shall I acknowledge? Being in bonds,
I am set

Free from the world, and therefore am I not

Afraid to speak; I have had the favor here

To have been kept prisoner now these many years
Against my will and justice.

Paulet. Madam, this
Was a great favor, and without this grace

You had not lived to see these days.

Mary Stuart. How so?

Paulet. Seeing your own subjects did pursue you, and had

The best in your own country.

Mary Stuart. That is true,
Because your Mildmay's ill persuasions first

Made me discharge my forces, and then caused

Mine enemies to burn my friends' main holds,
Castles and houses.

Paulet. Howsoe'er, it was
By great men of that country that the queen

Had earnest suit made to her to have yourself

Delivered to them, which her grace denied,

And to their great misliking.

Drury. Seventeen years
She hath kept your life to save it; and whereas

She calls your highness sister, she hath dealt

In truth and deed most graciously with you

And sister like, in seeking to preserve
Your life at once and honor.

Mary Stuart. Ay! wherein?

Drury. In that commission of your causes held

At York, which was at instance of your friends

Dissolved to save your honor.

Mary Stuart. No: the cause
Why that commission was dissolved indeed

Was that my friends could not be heard to inform

Against my loud accusers.

Paulet. But your friend

The bishop's self of Ross, your very friend,

Hath written that this meeting was dismissed

All only in your favor; and his book

Is extant: and this favor is but one

Of many graces which her majesty
Hath for mere love extended to you.

Mary Stuart. This

Is one great favor, even to have kept me here

So many years against my will.

Paulet. It was

For your own safety, seeing your countrymen

Sought your destruction, and to that swift end

Required to have you yielded up to them,

As was before said.

Mary Stuart. Nay, then, I will speak.
I am not afraid. It was determined
here

That I should not depart; and when I
was

Demanded by my subjects, this I know,
That my lord treasurer with his own
close hand

Writ in a packet which by trustier
hands

Was intercepted, and to me conveyed,
To the earl of Murray, that the devil
was tied

Fast in a chain, and they could keep
her not,

But here she should be safely kept.

Drury. That earl

Was even as honorable a gentleman
As I knew ever in that country bred.

Mary Stuart. One of the worst men
of the world he was:

A foul adulterer, one of general lust,
A spoiler and a murderer.

Drury. Six weeks long,
As I remember, here I saw him; where
He bore him very gravely, and main-
tained

The reputation even on all men's
tongues

In all things of a noble gentleman:
Nor have I heard him evil spoken of
Till this time ever.

Mary Stuart. Yea, my rebels here
Are honest men, and by the queen
have been
Maintained.

Paulet. You greatly do forget your-
self

To charge her highness with so foul a
fault,

Which you can never find ability
To prove on her.

Mary Stuart. What did she with the
French,

I pray you, at Newhaven?

Paulet. It appears

You have conceived so hardly of the
queen

My mistress, that you still inveterately
Interpret all her actions to the worst,
Not knowing the truth of all the cause;
but yet

I dare assure you that her majesty

Had most just cause and righteous, in
respect

As well of Calais as for other ends,
To do the thing she did, and more to
have done,

Had it so pleased her to put forth her
power.

And this is in you great unthankfulness
After so many favors and so great,
Whereof you will acknowledge in no
wise

The least of any; though her majesty
Hath of her own grace merely saved
your life,

To the utter discontentment of the best
Your subjects once in open parliament,
Who craved against you justice on the
charge

Of civil law-breach and rebellion.

Mary Stuart. I

Know no such matter, but full well I
know

Sir Francis Walsingham hath openly,
Since his abiding last in Scotland, said
That I should rue his entertainment
there.

Paulet. Madam, you have not rued
it, but have been

More honorably entertained than ever
yet

Was any other crown's competitor
In any realm save only this: whereof
Some have been kept close prisoners,
other some

Maimed and unnaturally disfigured.
some

Murdered.

Mary Stuart. But I was no competi-
tor:

All I required was in successive right
To be reputed but as next the crown.

Paulet. Nay, madam, you went fur-
ther, when you gave
The English arms and style, as though
our queen

Had been but an usurper on your
right.

Mary Stuart. My husband and my
kinsmen did therein

What they thought good: I had naught
to do with it.

Paulet. Why would you not then
loyally renounce

Your claim herein pretended, but with such

Condition, that you might be authorized
Next heir apparent to the crown?

Mary Stuart. I have made
At sundry times thereon good proffers,
which

Could never be accepted.

Paulet. Heretofore
It hath been proved unto you presently,
That in the very instant even of all
Your treaties and most friendlike offers,
were

Some dangerous crafts discovered.

Mary Stuart. You must think
I have some friends on earth; and if
they have done

Anything privily, what is that to me?

Paulet. Madam, it was somewhat to
you, and I would

For your own sake you had forborne
it, that

After advertisement and conscience
given

Of Morgan's devilish practice, to have
killed

A sacred queen, you yet would entertain

The murderer as your servant.

Mary Stuart. I might do it
With as good right as ever did your
queen

So entertain my rebels.

Drury. Be advised:
This speech is very hard, and all the
case

Here differs greatly.

Mary Stuart. Yea, let this then be:
Ye cannot yet of my conviction say

But I by partial judgment was condemned,

And the commissioners knew my son
could have

No right, were I convicted, and your
queen

Could have no children of her womb;
whereby

They might set up what man for king
they would.

Paulet. This is in you too great forgetfulness

Of honor and yourself, to charge these
lords

With two so foul and horrible faults,
as first

To take your life by partial doom from
you,

And then bestow the kingdom where
they liked.

Mary Stuart. Well, all is one to me:
and for my part

I thank God I shall die without regret
Of any thing that I have done alive.

Paulet. I would entreat you yet be
sorry at least

For the great wrong and well-deserving
grief

You have done the queen, my mistress.

Mary Stuart. Nay, thereon
Let others answer for themselves: I
have

Nothing to do with it. Have you borne
in mind

Those matters of my moneys that we
last

Conferred upon together?

Paulet. Madam, these

Are not forgotten.

Mary Stuart. Well it is if aught
Be yet at all remembered for my good.

Have here my letter sealed and super-
scribed,

And so farewell — or even as here men
may.

{*Exeunt PAULET and DRURY.*}

Had I that old strength in my weary
limbs

That in my heart yet fails not, fain
would I

Fare forth if not fare better. Tired
I am,

But not so lame in spirit I might not
take

Some comfort of the winter-wasted sun
This bitter Christmas to me, though
my feet

Were now no firmer nor more helpful
found

Than when I went but in my chair
abroad

Last weary June at Chartley. I can
stand

And go now without help of either
side,

And bend my hand again, thou seest,
to write:

I did not well perchance in sight of these
 To have made so much of this lame hand, which yet
 God knows was grievous to me, and to-day
 To make my letter up and superscribe
 And seal it with no outward show of pain
 Before their face and inquisition; yet
 I care not much in player's wise pit-eously
 To blind such eyes with feigning: though this Drew
 Be gentler and more gracious than his mate,
 And liker to be wrought on; but at last
 What need have I of men?
Mary Beaton. What then you may,
 I know not, seeing for all that was and is
 We are yet not at the last; but when you had,
 You have hardly failed to find more help of them
 And heartier service than most prosperous queens
 Exact of expectation: when your need
 Was greater than your name or natural state,
 And wage was none to look for but of death,
 As though the expectancy thereof and hope
 Were more than man's prosperities, men have given
 Heart's thanks to have this gift of God and you
 For dear life's guerdon, even the trust assured
 To drink for you the bitterness of death.
Mary Stuart. Ay, one said once it must be, — some one said
 I must be perilous ever, and my love
 More deadly than my will was evil or good
 Toward any of all these that through me should die:
 I know not who, nor when one said it; but
 I know too sure he lied not.
Mary Beaton. No; I think
 This was a seer indeed. I have heard of men
 That under imminence of death grew strong
 With mortal foresight, yet in life-days past
 Could see no foot before them, nor provide
 For their own fate or fortune any thing
 Against one angry chance of accident
 Or passionate fault of their own loves or hates
 That might to death betray them: such an one
 Thus haply might have prophesied, and had
 No strength to save himself.
Mary Stuart. I know not: yet
 Time was when I remembered.
Mary Beaton. It should be
 No enemy's saying whom you remember not;
 You are wont not to forget your enemies; yet
 The word rang sadder than a friend's should fall
 Save in some strange pass of the spirit or flesh
 For love's sake haply hurt to death.
Mary Stuart. It seems
 Thy mind is bent to know the name of me,
 That of myself I know not.
Mary Beaton. Nay, my mind
 Has other thoughts to beat upon: for me
 It may suffice to know the saying for true,
 And never care who said it.
Mary Stuart. True? too sure,
 God to mine heart's grief hath approved it. See,
 Nor Scot nor Englishman that takes on him
 The service of my sorrow, but partakes
 The sorrow of my service; man by man,
 As that one said, they perish of me: yea,
 Were I a sword sent upon earth, or plague
 Bred of aerial poison, I could be
 No deadlier where unwillingly I strike,
 Who where I would can hurt not: Percy died

<p>By his own hand in prison, Howard by law; These young men with strange torments done to death, Who should have rid me and the world of her That is our scourge, and to the Church of God A pestilence that wastes it: all the north Wears yet the scars engraven of civil steel Since its last rising: nay, she saith but right, Mine enemy, saying by these her ser- vile tongues I have brought upon her land mine own land's curse, And a sword follows at my heel, and fire Is kindled of mine eyeshot. And be- fore, Whom did I love that died not of it? Whom That I would save might I deliver, when I had once but looked on him with love, or pledged Friendship? I should have died, I think, long since, That many might have died not, and this word Had not been written of me nor ful- filled, But perished in the saying, a prophecy That took the prophet by the throat, and slew — As sure I think it slew him. Such a song Might my poor servant slain before my face Have sung before the stroke of violent death Had fallen upon him there for my sake. <i>Mary Beaton.</i> Ah! You think so? this remembrance was it not That hung and hovered in your mind but now, Moved your heart backward all unwit- tingly To some blind memory of the man long dead?</p>	<p><i>Mary Stuart.</i> In sooth, I think my prophet should have been David. <i>Mary Beaton.</i> You thought of him? <i>Mary Stuart.</i> An old sad thought: The moan of it was made long since, and he Not unremembered. <i>Mary Beaton.</i> Nay, of him indeed Record was made, — a royal record: whence No marvel is it that you forgot not him. <i>Mary Stuart.</i> I would forget no friends nor enemies: these More needs me now remember. Think'st thou not This woman hates me deadlier — or this queen That is not woman — than myself could hate Except I were as she in all things? Then I should love no such woman as am I Much more than she may love me: yet I am sure, Or so near surety as all belief may be, She dare not slay me for her soul's sake; nay, Though that were made as light of as a leaf Storm-shaken, in such stormy winds of state As blow between us like a blast of death, For her throne's sake she durst not, which must be Broken to build my scaffold. Yet, God wot, Perchance a straw's weight now cast in by chance Might weigh my life down in the scale her hand Holds hardly straight for trembling: if she be Woman at all, so tempered naturally And with such spirit and sense as thou and I, Should I for wrath so far forget myself As these men sometime charge me that I do, My tongue might strike my head off. By this head That yet I wear to swear by, if life be</p>
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Thankworthy, God might well be
 thanked for this
 Of me or whoso loves me in the world,
 That I spake never half my heart out
 yet,
 For any sore temptation of them all,
 To her or hers; nor ever put but once
 My heart upon my paper, writing plain
 The things I thought, heard, knew for
 truth, of her,
 Believed or feigned—nay, feigned not
 to believe
 Of her fierce follies fed with wry-
 mouthed praise,
 And that vain ravin of her sexless lust
 Which could not feed nor hide its hun-
 ger, curb
 With patience nor allay with love the
 thirst
 That mocked itself as all mouths
 mocked it. Ha!
 What might the reading of these truths
 have wrought
 Within her maiden mind, what seed
 have sown,
 Trow'st thou, in her sweet spirit, of re-
 venge
 Toward me that showed her queenship,
 in the glass
 A subject's hand of hers had put in
 mine,
 The likeness of it loathed and laugh-
 able
 As they that worshipped it with words
 and signs
 Beheld her and bemocked her?
Mary Beaton. Certainly,
 I think that soul drew never breath
 alive
 To whom this letter might seem par-
 donable
 Which timely you forbore to send her.
Mary Stuart. Nay,
 I doubt not I did well to keep it back—
 And did not ill to write it; for God
 knows
 It was no small ease to my heart.
Mary Beaton. But say
 I had not burnt it as you bade me burn,
 But kept it privily safe against a need
 That I might haply some time have of
 it?
Mary Stuart. What, to destroy me?

Mary Beaton. Hardly, sure, to save.
Mary Stuart. Why shouldst thou
 think to bring me to my death?
Mary Beaton. Indeed, no man am I
 that love you; nor
 Need I go therefore in such fear of you
 As of my mortal danger.
Mary Stuart. On my life,
 (Long life or short, with gentle or vio-
 lent end,
 I know not, and would choose not,
 though I might
 So take God's office on me) one that
 heard
 Would swear thy speech had in it, and
 subtly mixed,
 A savor as of menace, or a sound
 As of an imminent ill or perilous sense
 Which was not in thy meaning.
Mary Beaton. No: in mine
 There lurked no treason ever; nor have
 you
 Cause to think worse of me than loy-
 ally,
 If proof may be believed on witness.
Mary Stuart. Sure,
 I think I have not, nor I should not
 have:
 Thy life has been the shadow cast of
 mine,
 A present faith to serve my present need,
 A foot behind my footsteps; as long
 since
 In those French dances that we trod,
 and laughed
 The blithe way through together. Thou
 couldst sing
 Then, and a great while gone it is by
 this
 Since I heard song or music: I could
 now
 Find in my heart to bid thee, as the
 Jews
 Were once bid sing in their captivity
 One of their songs of Sion, sing me now,
 If one thou knowest, for love of that
 far time,
 One of our songs of Paris.
Mary Beaton. Give me leave
 A little to cast up some wandering
 words,
 And gather back such memories as may
 beat

About my mind of such a song, and yet
I think I might renew some note long
dumb

That once your ear allowed of. — I did
pray, [Aside.

Tempt me not, God: and by her mouth
again

He tempts me — nay, but prompts me,
being most just,

To know by trial if all remembrance be
Dead as remorse or pity that in birth
Died, and were childless in her: if she
quite

Forget that very swan-song of thy love,
My love that wast, my love that wouldst
not be,

Let God forget her now at last as I
Remember: if she think but one soft
thought,

Cast one poor word upon thee, God
thereby

Shall surely bid me let her live: if none,
I shoot that letter home, and sting her
dead.

God strengthen me to sing but these
words through,

Though I fall dumb at end forever.
Now — [She sings.

*Après tant de jours, après tant de pleurs,
Soyez secourable à mon âme en peine.*

*Voyez comme Avril fait l'amour aux
fleurs;*

*Dame d'amour, dame aux belles couleurs,
Dieu vous a fait belle, Amour vous fait
reine.*

*Rions, je t'en prie; aimons, je le veux.
Le temps fuit et rit et ne revient guère
Pour baiser le bout de tes blonds cheveux,
Pour baiser tes cils, ta bouche et tes yeux;
L'amour n'a qu'un jour auprès de sa mère.*

Mary Stuart. Nay, I should once
have known that song, thou
say'st,

And him that sang it and should now be
dead:

Was it — but his rang sweeter — was it
not

Remy Belleau?

Mary Beaton (My letter — here at
heart!) [Aside.

I think it might be — were it better writ
And courtlier phrased, with Latin spice
cast in,

And a more tunable descant.

Mary Stuart. Ay; how sweet

Sang all the world about those stars
that sang

With Ronsard for the strong mid star
of all,

His bay-bound head all glorious with
gray hairs,

Who sang my birth and bridal! When
I think

Of those French years, I only seem to
see

A light of swords and singing, only hear
Laughter/ of love and lovely stress of
lutes,

And in between the passion of them
borne

Sound of swords crossing ever, as of
feet

Dancing, and life and death still equally
Blithe and bright-eyed from battle.

Haply now

My sometime sister, mad Queen Madge,
is grown

As grave as I should be, and wears at
waist

No hearts of last year's lovers any more
Enchased for jewels round her girdle-
stead,

But rather beads for penitence; yet I
doubt

Time should not more abash her heart
than mine,

Who live not heartless yet. These
days like those

Have power but for a season given to
do

No more upon our spirits than they may,
And what they may we know not till it
be

Done, and we need no more take thought
of it,

As I no more of death or life to-day.

Mary Beaton. That shall you surely
need not.

Mary Stuart. So I think,

Our keepers being departed; and by
these,

Even by the uncourtlier as the gentler
man,

I read as in a glass their queen's plain heart,
And that by her at last I shall not die.

SCENE III. — GREENWICH PALACE.
QUEEN ELIZABETH and DAVISON.

Elizabeth. Thou hast seen Lord Howard? I bade him send thee.

Davison. Madam,
But now he came upon me hard at hand,
And by your gracious message bade me in.

Elizabeth. The day is fair as April:
hast thou been
Abroad this morning? 'Tis no winter's sun
That makes these trees forget their nakedness,
And all the glittering ground, as 'twere in hope,
Breathe laughingly.

Davison. Indeed, the gracious air
Had drawn me forth into the park, and thence
Comes my best speed to attend upon your grace.

Elizabeth. My grace is not so gracious as the sun
That graces thus the late distempered air;
And you should oftener use to walk abroad,
Sir, than your custom is: I would not have
Good servants heedless of their natural health
To do me sickly service. It were strange
That one twice bound as woman and as queen
To care for good men's lives and loyalties
Should prove herself toward either dangerous.

Davison. That
Can be no part of any servant's fear
Who lives for service of your majesty.

Elizabeth. I would not have it be, —
God else forbid! —
Who have so loyal servants as I hold
All now that bide about me; for I will not

Think, though such villany once were in men's minds,

That twice among mine English gentlemen

Shall hearts be found so foul as theirs who thought,

When I was horsed for hunting, to waylay

And shoot me through the back at unawares

With poisoned bullets; nor, thou knowest, would I,

When this was opened to me, take such care,

Ride so fenced round about with iron guard,

Or walk so warily as men counselled me
For loyal fear of what thereafter might
More prosperously be plotted: nay, God knows,

I would not hold on such poor terms my life,

With such a charge upon it, as to breathe

In dread of death or treason till the day
That they should stop my trembling breath, and ease

The piteous heart that panted like a slave's

Of all vile fear forever. So to live
Were so much hatefuller than thus to die,

I do not think that man or woman draws
Base breath of life the loathsomest on earth

Who by such purchase of perpetual fear
And deathless doubt of all in trust of none
Would shudderingly prolong it.

Davison. Even too well
Your servants know that greatness of your heart
Which gives you yet unguarded to men's eyes;

And were unworthier found to serve or live

Than is the unworthiest of them, did not this

Make all their own hearts hotter with desire

To be the bulwark or the price of yours

Paid to redeem it from the arrest of death.

Elizabeth. So haply should they be
whose hearts beat true
With loyal blood; but whoso says they
are
Is but a loving liar.

Davison. I trust your grace
Hath in your own heart no such doubt
of them
As speaks in mockery through your lips.

Elizabeth. By God,
I say much less than righteous truth
might speak

Of their loud loves that ring with
emptiness,
And hollow-throated loyalties whose
heart

Is wind and clamorous promise. Ye
desire, —

With all your souls ye swear that ye
desire, —

The queen of Scots were happily re-
moved,

And not a knave that loves me will put
hand

To the enterprise ye look for only of me
Who only would forbear it.

Davison. If your grace
Be minded yet it shall be done at all,
The way that were most honorable and
just

Were safest, sure, and best.

Elizabeth. I dreamt last night
Our murderess there in hold had tasted
death

By execution of the sentence done
That was pronounced upon her; and the
news

So stung my heart with wrath to hear
of it

That had I had a sword, — look to't,
and 'ware! —

I had thrust it through thy body.

Davison. God defend!

'Twas well I came not in your highness'
way

While the hot mood was on you. But
indeed

I would know soothly if your mind be
changed

From its late root of purpose.

Elizabeth. No, by God;

But I were fain it could be somewise
done,

And leave the blame not on me. And
so much,

If there were love and honesty in one
Whom I held faithful and exact of care,
Should easily be performed; but here
I find

This dainty fellow so precise a knave
As will take all things dangerous on his
tongue,

And nothing on his hand: hot-mouthed
and large

In zeal to stuff mine ears with promises,
But perjurous in performance: did he
not

Set hand among you to the bond where-
by

He is bound at utmost hazard of his
life

To do me such a service? yet I could
Have wrought as well without him, had
I wist

Of this faint falsehood in his heart.
There is

That Wingfield whom thou wot'st of,
would have done

With glad good-will what I required of
him,

And made no Puritan mouths on't.

Davison. Madam, yet
Far better were it all should but be
done

By line of law and judgment.

Elizabeth. There be men
Wiser than thou that see this otherwise.

Davison. All is not wisdom that of
wise men comes,

Nor are all eyes that search the ways
of state

Clear as a just man's conscience.

Elizabeth. Proverbs! ha?

Who made thee master of these sen-
tences,

Prime tongue of ethics and philosophy?

Davison. An honest heart to serve
your majesty;

Naught else nor subtler in its reach of
wit

Than very simpleness of meaning.

Elizabeth. Nay,

I do believe thee; heartily I do.

Did my lord admiral not desire thee
bring

The warrant for her execution?

Davison. Ay,
Madam; here is it.
Elizabeth. I would it might not be,
Or being so just were yet not neces-
sary.
Art thou not heartily sorry — wouldst
thou not,
I say, be sad — to see me sign it?
Davison. Madam,
I grieve at any soul's mishap that lives,
And specially for shipwreck of a life
To you so near allied; but seeing this
doom
Wrung forth from justice by necessity,
I had rather guilt should bleed than
innocence.
Elizabeth. When I shall sign, take
thou this instantly
To the lord chancellor: see it straight
be sealed
As quietly as he may, not saying a
word,
That no man come to know it untimely:
then
Send it to the earls of Kent and
Shrewsbury,
Who are here set down to see this jus-
tice done:
I would no more be troubled with this
coil
Till all be through. But, for the place
of doom,
The hall there of the castle, in my
mind,
Were fitter than the court or open
green.
And as thou goest betake thee on thy
way
To Walsingham, where he lies sick at
home,
And let him know what hath of us
been done:
Whereof the grief, I fear me, shall go
near
To kill his heart outright.
Davison. Your majesty
Hath yet not signed the warrant.
Elizabeth. Ha! God's blood!
Art thou from tutor of philosophy late
Grown counsellor too, and more than
counsellor, thou
To appoint me where and what this
hand of mine

Shall at thy beck obsequiously sub-
scribe
And follow on thy finger? By God's
death,
What if it please me now not sign at
all?
This letter of my kinswoman's last
writ
Hath more compulsion in it, and more
power
To enforce my pity, than a thousand
tongues
Dictating death against her in mine
ear
Of mine own vassal subjects. Here
but now
She writes me she thanks God with all
her heart
That it hath pleased him by the mean
of me
To make an end of her life's pilgrim-
age,
Which hath been weary to her; and
doth not ask
To see its length drawn longer, having
had
Too much experience of its bitterness:
But only doth entreat me, since she
may
Look for no favor at their zealous
hands
Who are first in councils of my min-
istry,
That only I myself will grant her
prayers;
Whereof the first is, since she cannot
hope
For English burial with such Catholic
rites
As here were used in time of the an-
cient kings,
Mine ancestors and hers, and since the
tombs
Lie violated in Scotland of her sires,
That so soon ever as her enemies
Shall with her innocent blood be sati-
ated,
Her body by her servants may be
borne
To some ground consecrated, there to
be
Interred: and rather, she desires, in
France,

Where sleep her honored mother's
ashes; so
At length may her poor body find the rest
Which living it has never known:
thereto,
She prays me, from the fears she hath
of those
To whose harsh hand I have abandoned her,
She may not secretly be done to death,
But in her servants' sight and others',
who
May witness her obedience kept and
faith
To the true Church, and guard her
memory safe
From slanders haply to be blown
abroad
Concerning her by mouths of enemies:
last,
She asks that her attendants, who so
well
And faithfully through all her miseries
past
Have served her, may go freely where
they please,
And lose not those small legacies of
hers
Which poverty can yet bequeath to
them.
This she conjures me by the blood of
Christ,
Our kinship, and my grandsire's
memory,
Who was her father's grandsire and a
king,
And by the name of queen she bears
with her
Even to the death, that I will not
refuse,
And that a word in mine own hand
may thus
Assure her, who will then as she hath
lived
Die mine affectionate sister and pris-
oner. See,
Howe'er she have sinned, what heart
were mine, if this
Drew no tears from me: not the mean-
est soul
That lives most miserable but with
such words
Must needs draw down men's pity.

Davison. Sure it is,
This queen hath skill of writing: and
her hand
Hath manifold eloquence with various
voice
To express discourse of sirens or of
snakes,
A mermaid's or a monster's, uttering
best
All music or all malice. Here is come
A letter writ long since of hers to you
From Sheffield Castle, which for shame
or fear
She durst not or she would not thence
despatch,
Sent secretly to me from Fotheringay,
Not from her hand, but with her own
hand writ,
So foul of import and malignity
I durst not for your majesty's respect
With its fierce infamies afire from hell
Offend your gracious eyesight; but
because
Your justice by your mercy's ignorant
hand
Hath her fair eyes put out, and walks
now blind
Even by the pit's edge deathward, par-
don me
If what you never should have seen be
shown
By hands that rather would take fire in
hand
Than lay in yours this writing.

[Gives her a letter.

Elizabeth. By this light,
Whate'er be here, thou hadst done pre-
sumptuously,
And Walsingham thy principal, to
keep
Aught from mine eyes that being to me
designed
Might even with most offence enlighten
them.
Here is her hand, indeed; and she
takes up [Reading.
In gracious wise enough the charge
imposed
By promise on her and desire of ours,
How loath soe'er she be, regretfully
To bring such things in question of
discourse,
Yet with no passion but sincerity,

As God shall witness her, declares to
 us
 What our good lady of Shrewsbury
 said to her
 Touching ourself in terms ensuing:
 whereto
 Answering, she chid this dame for such
 belief,
 And reprehended for licentious tongue,
 To speak so lewdly of us; which her-
 self
 Believes not, knowing the woman's
 natural heart
 An evil will as then to us-ward. Here
 She writes no more than I would well
 believe
 Of her as of the countess. Ha!
Davison. Your grace
 Shall but defile and vex your eyes and
 heart
 To read these villanies through.
Elisabeth. God's death, man! peace:
 Thou wert not best incense me toward
 thine own,
 Whose eyes have been before me in
 them. What!
 Was she not mad to write this? *One
 that had*
*Your promise — lay with you times num-
 berless —*
*All license and all privateness that may
 Be used of wife and husband! yea, of
 her*
 And more dead men than shame remem-
 bers. *God*
*Shall stand her witness — with the devil
 of hell*
 For sponsor to her vows, whose spirit
 in her
 Begot himself this issue. Ha! the duke
 — Nay, God shall give me patience —
 and his knave,
 And Hatton — God have mercy! nay,
 but hate,
 Hate and constraint and rage have
 wrecked her wits,
 And continence of life cut off from lust,
 — This common stale of Scotland, that
 has tried
 The sins of three rank nations, and con-
 sumed
 Their veins whose life she took not, —
 Italy,

France that put half this poison in her
 blood,
 And her own kingdom that being sick
 therewith
 Vomited out on ours the venomous
 thing
 Whose head we set not foot on; but
 may God
 Make my fame fouler through the
 world than hers,
 And ranker in men's record, if I spare
 The she-wolf that I saved, the woman-
 beast,
 Wolf-woman — how the Latin rings we
 know,
 And what lewd lair first reared her, and
 whose hand
 Writ broad across the Louvre and Holy-
 rood
Lupanar; but no brothel ever bred
 Or breathed so rank a soul's infection,
 spawned
 Or spat such foulness in God's face and
 man's,
 Or festered in such falsehood as her
 breath
 Strikes honor sick with, and the spirit
 of shame
 Dead as her fang shall strike herself, and
 send
 The serpent that corruption calls her
 'soul
 To vie strange venoms with the worm
 of hell,
 And make the face of darkness and the
 grave
 Blush hotter with the fires wherein that
 soul
 Sinks deeper than damnation.
Davison. Let your grace
 Think only that but now the thing is
 known
 And self-discovered which too long your
 love
 Too dangerously hath cherished; and
 forget
 All but that end which yet remains for
 her,
 That right by pity be not overcome.
Elisabeth. God pity so my soul as I
 do right,
 And show me no more grace alive or
 dead

Than I do justice here. Give me again
That warrant I put by, being foolish:

yea,

Thy word spake sooth, — my soul's eyes
were put out;

I could not see for pity. Thou didst
well —

I am bounden to thee heartily — to cure
My sight of this distemper, and my soul.
Here in God's sight I set mine hand,
who thought

Never to take this thing upon it, nor
Do God so bitter service. Take this
hence,

And let me see no word nor hear of her
Till the sun see not such a soul alive.

ACT V.—MARY STUART.

SCENE I.—MARY'S CHAMBER IN FOTHERINGAY CASTLE.

MARY STUART and MARY BEATON.

Mary Stuart (sings).

*O Lord my God,
I have trusted in thee ;*

*O Jesu my dearest one,
Now set me free.*

*In prison's oppression,
In sorrow's obsession,
I weary for thee.*

*With sighing and crying
Bowed down as dying,*

I adore thee, I implore thee, set me free !

Free are the dead: yet fain I would have
had

Once, before all captivity find end,
Some breath of freedom living. These
that come,

I think, with no such message, must not
find,

For all this lameness of my limbs, a
heart

As maimed in me with sickness. Three
years gone,

When last I parted from the earl mar-
shal's charge,

I did not think to see his face again
Turned on me as his prisoner. Now his
wife

Will take no jealousy more to hear of
it,

I trust, albeit we meet not as unfriends,
If it be mortal news he brings me. Go,
If I seem ready, as meseems I should,
And well arrayed to bear myself indeed
None otherwise than queenlike in their
sight,

Bid them come in.

[*Exit MARY BEATON.*

I cannot tell at last

If it be fear or hope that should expect
Death: I have had enough of hope, and
fear

Was none of my familiars while I lived
Such life as had more pleasant things
to lose

Than death or life may now divide me
from

'Tis not so much to look upon the sun
With eyes that may not lead us where
we will,

And halt behind the footless flight of
hope

With feet that may not follow; nor were
aught

So much, of all things life may think to
have,

That one not cowardly born should find
it worth

The purchase of so base a price as this,
To stand self-shamed as coward. I do
not think

This is mine end that comes upon me;
but

I had liefer far it were than, were it not,
That ever I should fear it.

*Enter KENT, SHREWSBURY, BEALE,
and Sheriff.*

Sirs, good day:

With such good heart as prisoners have,
I bid

You and your message welcome.

Kent. Madam, this

The secretary of the council here hath
charge

To read as their commission.

Mary Stuart. Let me hear

In as brief wise as may beseem the time
The purport of it.

Beale. Our commission here

Given by the council under the great
seal

Pronounces on your head for present
doom

Death, by this written sentence.

Mary Stuart. Ay, my lords?

May I believe this, and not hold myself

Mocked as a child with shadows? In
God's name,

Speak you, my lord of Shrewsbury: let
me know

If this be dream or waking.

Kent. Verily,

No dream it is, nor dreamers we that
pray,

Madam, you meetly would prepare your-
self

To stand before God's judgment
presently.

Mary Stuart. I had rather so than
ever stand again

Before the face of man's. Why speak
not you,

To whom I speak, my lord earl marshal?
Nay,

Look not so heavily: by my life, he
stands

As one at point to weep. Why, good my
lord,

To know that none may swear by Mary's
life,

And hope again to find belief of man
Upon so slight a warrant, should not
bring

This trouble on your eyes: look up, and
say

The word you have for her that never
was

Less than your friend, and prisoner.

Shrewsbury. None save this,

Which willingly I would not speak, I
may:

That presently your time is come to die.

Mary Stuart. Why, then, I am well
content to leave a world

Wherein I am no more serviceable at
all

To God or man, and have therein so
long

Endured so much affliction. All my life
I have ever earnestly desired the love

And friendship of your queen; have
warned her oft

Of coming dangers; and have cherished
long

The wish that I but once might speak
with her

In plain-souled confidence, being well
assured,

Had we but once met, there an end had
been

Of jealousies between us: but our foes,
With equal wrong toward either, treach-
erously

Have kept us still in sunder; by whose
craft

And crooked policy hath my sister's
crown

Fallen in great peril, and myself have
been

Imprisoned, and inveterately maligned,
And here must now be murdered. But

I know

That only for my faith's sake I must die,
And this to know for truth is recom-
pense

As large as all my sufferings. For the
crime

Wherewith I am charged, upon this
holy book

I lay mine hand for witness of my plea,
I am wholly ignorant of it; and sol-
emnly

Declare that never yet conspiracy
Devised against the queen my sister's
life

Took instigation or assent from me.

Kent. You swear but on a popish
Testament:

Such oaths are all as worthless as the
book.

Mary Stuart. I swear upon the book
wherein I trust:

Would you give rather credit to mine
oath

Sworn on your Scriptures that I trust
not in?

Kent. Madam, I fain would have you
heartily

Renounce your superstition; toward
which end

With us the godly dean of Peter-
borough,

Good Richard Fletcher, well approved
for faith

Of God and of the queen, is hither
come

To proffer you his prayerful ministry.

Mary Stuart. If you, my lords, or he
will pray for me,
I shall be thankful for your prayers;
but may not
With theirs that hold another faith mix
mine.
I pray you, therefore, that mine almoner
may
Have leave to attend on me, that from
his hands
I, having made confession, may receive
The sacrament.

Kent. We may not grant you this.

Mary Stuart. I shall not see my
chaplain ere I die?
But two months gone, this grace was
granted me
By word expressly from your queen, to
have
Again his ministration; and at last
In the utter hour and bitter strait of
death,
Is this denied me?

Kent. Madam, for your soul

More meet it were to cast these mum-
meries out,
And bear Christ only in your heart,
than serve
With ceremonies of ritual hand and
tongue
His mere idolatrous likeness.

Mary Stuart. This were strange,
That I should bear him visible in my
hand,
Or keep with lips and knees his titular
rites,
And cast in heart no thought upon
him. Nay,
Put me, I pray, to no more argument;
But if this least thing be not granted,
yet
Grant me to know the season of my
death.

Shrewsbury. At eight by dawn to-
morrow you must die.

Mary Stuart. So shall I hardly see
the sun again.
By dawn to-morrow? meanest men con-
demned
Give not their lives' breath up so sud-
denly:
Howbeit, I had rather yield you thanks,
who make

Such brief end of the bitterness of
death
For me who have borne such bitter
length of life,
Than plead with protestation of appeal
For half a piteous hour's remission;
nor
Henceforward shall I be denied of
man
Aught, who may never now crave aught
again,
But whence is no denial. Yet shall
this

Not easily be believed of men, nor find
In foreign ears acceptance, that a queen
Should be thrust out of life thus. Good
my friend,
Bid my physician Gorion come to me:
I have to speak with him — sirs, with
your leave —
Of certain moneys due to me in France.
What! shall I twice desire your leave,
my lords,

To live these poor last hours of mine
alive
At peace among my friends? I have
much to do,
And little time wherein to do it is left.

Shrewsbury (to KENT apart). I pray
she may not mean worse than I
would
Against herself ere morning.

Kent. Let not then
This French knave's drugs come near
her, nor himself:
We will take order for it.

Shrewsbury. Nay, this were but
To exasperate more her thwarted
heart, and make
Despair more desperate than itself.
Pray God

She be not minded to compel us put
Force at the last upon her of men's
hands
To hale her violently to death, and
make

Judgment look foul and fierce as mur-
der's face
With stain of strife and passion.

[*Exit all but MARY STUART and
MARY BEATON.*]

Mary Stuart. So, my friend,
The last of all our Maries are you left

To-morrow. Strange has been my life,
 and now
 Strange looks my death upon me: yet,
 albeit
 Nor the hour nor manner of it be mine
 to choose,
 Ours is it yet, and all men's in the
 world,
 To make death welcome in what wise
 we will.
 Bid you my chaplain, though he see
 me not,
 Watch through the night, and pray for
 me: perchance,
 When ere the sundown they shall bring
 me forth,
 I may behold him, and upon my knees
 Receive his blessing. Let our supper
 be
 Served earlier in than wont was:
 whereunto
 I bid my true poor servants here, to
 take
 Farewell, and drink at parting to them
 all
 The cup of my last kindness, in good
 hope
 They shall stand alway constant in
 their faith,
 And dwell in peace together: there-
 upon
 What little store is left me will I share
 Among them, and between my girls
 divide
 My wardrobe and my jewels severally,
 Reserving but the black robe and the
 red
 That shall attire me for my death; and
 last
 With mine own hand shall be my will
 writ out,
 And all memorials more set down
 therein
 That I would leave for legacies of love
 To my next kinsmen and my house-
 hold folk.
 And to the king my brother yet of
 France
 Must I write briefly, but a word to say
 I am innocent of the charge whereon I
 die
 Now for my right's sake claimed upon
 this crown,

And our true faith's sake, but am
 barred from sight
 Even of mine almoner here, though
 hard at hand;
 And I would bid him take upon his
 charge
 The keeping of my servants, as I think
 He shall not for compassionate shame
 refuse,
 Albeit his life be softer than his heart:
 And in religion for a queen's soul pray
 That once was styled Most Christian,
 and is now
 In the true faith about to die, deprived
 Of all her past possessions. But this
 most
 And first beehoves it, that the king of
 Spain
 By Gorion's word of mouth receive my
 heart,
 Who soon shall stand before him. Bid
 the leech
 Come hither, and alone, to speak with
 me.

[Exit MARY BEATON.]

She is dumb as death: yet never in her
 life
 Hath she been quick of tongue. For
 all the rest,
 Poor souls, how well they love me, all
 as well
 I think I know; and one of them or
 twain
 At least may surely see me to my death
 Ere twice the hours have changed
 again. Perchance
 Love that can weep not would the glad-
 lier die
 For those it cannot weep on. Time
 wears thin:
 They should not now play laggard
 nay, he comes,
 The last that ever speaks alone with
 me
 Before my soul shall speak alone with
 God.

Enter GORION.

I have sent once more for you to no
 such end
 As sick men for physicians: no strong
 drug
 May put the death next morning
 twelve hours back

Whose twilight overshadows me, that
 Nor sick nor medicinable. Let me
 know

If I may lay the last of all my trust
 On you that ever shall be laid on man
 To prove him kind and loyal.

Gorion. So may God

Deal with me, madam, as I prove to
 you

Faithful, though none but I were in the
 world

That you might trust beside.

Mary Stuart. With equal heart

Do I believe and thank you. I would
 send

To Paris for the ambassador from
 Spain

This letter with two diamonds, which
 your craft

For me must cover from men's thiev-
 ish eyes,

Where they may be not looked for.

Gorion. Easily

Within some molten drug may these be
 hid,

And faithfully by me conveyed to
 him.

Mary Stuart. The lesser of them
 shall he keep in sign

Of my good friendship toward himself:
 but this

In token to King Philip shall he give
 That for the truth I die, and dying com-
 mend

To him my friends and servants, Gil-
 bert Curle,

His sister, and Jane Kennedy, who
 shall

To-night watch by me; and my ladies
 all

That have endured my prison: let him
 not

Forget from his good favor one of
 these

That I remember to him; Charles
 Arundel,

And either banished Paget; one whose
 heart

Was better toward my service than his
 hand,

Morgan; and of mine exiles for their
 faith,

The prelates first of Glasgow and of
 Ross;

And Liggons and Throgmorton, that
 have lost

For me their leave to live on English
 earth;

And Westmoreland, that lives now
 more forlorn

Than died that earl who rose for me
 with him.

These I beseech him favor for my sake
 Still: and forget not, if he come again

To rule as king in England, one of them
 That were mine enemies here: the

treasurer first,
 And Leicester, Walsingham, and Hunt-
 ington,

At Tutbury once my foe, fifteen years
 gone,

And Wade that spied upon me three
 years since,

And Paulet here my gaoler: set them
 down

For him to wreak wrath's utmost jus-
 tice on,

In my revenge remembered. Though
 I be

Dead, let him not forsake his hope to
 reign

Upon this people: with my last breath
 left

I make this last prayer to him, that not
 the less

He will maintain the invasion yet de-
 signed

Of us before on England: let him think,
 It is God's quarrel, and on earth a cause

Well worthy of his greatness; which
 being won,

Let him forget no man of these nor me.
 And now will I lie down, that four

hours' sleep
 May give me strength before I sleep

again,
 And need take never thought for wak-
 ing more.

SCENE II. — THE PRESENCE CHAMBER.

SHREWSBURY, KENT, PAULET, DRURY,
 MELVILLE, and Attendants.

Kent. The stroke is past of eight.

Shrewsbury. Not far, my lord.

Kent. What stays the provost and the sheriff yet
That went ere this to bring the prisoner forth?
What! are her doors locked inwards?
Then perchance
Our last night's auguries of some close design
By death contrived of her self-slaught'rous hand
To baffle death by justice hit but right
The heart of her bad purpose.
Shrewsbury. Fear it not:
See where she comes, a queenlier thing to see
Than whom such thoughts take hold on.
Enter MARY STUART, led by two gentlemen and preceded by the Sheriff; MARY BEATON, BARBARA MOWBRAY, and other ladies behind, who remain in the doorway.
Melville (kneeling to MARY). Woe am I,
Madam, that I must bear to Scotland back
Such tidings watered with such tears as these!
Mary Stuart. Weep not, good Melville: rather should your heart
Rejoice that here an end is come at last
Of Mary Stuart's long sorrows; for be sure
That all this world is only vanity.
And this record I pray you make of me,
That a true woman to my faith I die,
And true to Scotland and to France;
but God
Forgive them that have long desired mine end,
And with false tongues have thirsted for my blood
As the hart thirsteth for the water-brooks.
O God, who art truth, and the author of all truth,
Thou knowest the extreme recesses of my heart,
And how that I was willing all my days
That England should with Scotland be fast friends.
Commend me to my son: tell him that I

Have nothing done to prejudice his rights
As king. And now, good Melville, fare thee well.
My lord of Kent, whence comes it that your charge
Hath bidden back my women there at door
Who fain to the end would bear me company?
Kent. Madam, this were not seemly nor discreet,
That these should so have leave to vex men's ears
With cries and loose lamentings: haply too
They might in superstition seek to dip
Their handkerchiefs for relics in your blood.
Mary Stuart. That will I pledge my word they shall not. Nay,
The queen would surely not deny me this,
The poor last thing that I shall ask on earth.
Even a far meaner person dying, I think,
She would not have so handled. Sir, you know
I am her cousin, of her grandsire's blood,
A queen of France by marriage, and by birth
Anointed queen of Scotland. My poor girls
Desire no more than but to see me die.
Shrewsbury. Madam, you have leave to elect of this your train
Two ladies with four men to go with you.
Mary Stuart. I choose from forth my Scottish following here
Jane Kennedy, with Elspeth Curle: of men,
Bourgoin and Gorion shall attend on me,
Gervais and Didier.— Come then, let us go.
[*Exeunt: manent MARY BEATON and BARBARA MOWBRAY.*
Barbara. I wist I was not worthy, though my child

It is that her own hands made Christian: but
I deemed she should have bid you go
with her.

Alas! and would not all we die with
her?

Mary Beaton. Why, from the gallery
here at hand your eyes

May go with her along the hall be-
neath

Even to the scaffold; and I fain would
hear

What fain I would not look on. Pray
you, then,

If you may bear to see it as those below,
Do me that sad good service of your
eyes

For mine to look upon it, and declare
All that till all be done I will not see:
I pray you of your pity.

Barbara. Though mine heart
Break, it shall not for fear forsake the
sight

That may be faithful yet in following
her,

Nor yet for grief refuse your prayer,
being fain

To give your love such bitter comfort,
who

So long have never left her.

Mary Beaton. Till she die —
I have ever known I shall not till she
die.

See you yet aught? if I hear spoken
words,

My heart can better bear these pulses,
else

Unbearable, that rend it.

Barbara. Yea, I see

Stand in mid hall the scaffold, black as
death,

And black the block upon it; all
around,

Against the throng a guard of halber-
diers;

And the axe against the scaffold-rail
reclined,

And two men masked on either hand
beyond;

And hard behind the block a cushion
set,

Black, as the chair behind it.

Mary Beaton. When I saw

Fallen on a scaffold once a young man's
head,

Such things as these I saw not. Nay,
but on:

I knew not that I spake; and toward
your ears

Indeed I spake not.

Barbara. All those faces change;
She comes more royally than ever yet
Fell foot of man triumphant on this
earth,

Imperial more than empire made her,
born

Enthroned as queen sat never. Not a
line

Stirs of her sovereign feature: like a
bride

Brought home she mounts the scaffold;
and her eyes

Sweep regal round the cirque beneath,
and rest,

Subsiding with a smile. She sits, and
they,

The doomsmen earls, beside her; at her
left

The sheriff, and the clerk at hand on
high,

To read the warrant.

Mary Beaton. None stands there but
knows

What things therein are writ against
her: God

Knows what therein is writ not. God
forgive

All!

Barbara. Not a face there breathes
of all the throng

But is more moved than hers to hear
this read,

Whose look alone is changed not.

Mary Beaton. Once I knew

A face that changed not in as dire an
hour,

More than the queen's face changes.
Hath he not

Ended?

Barbara. You cannot hear them
speak below:

Come near, and hearken; bid not me
repeat

All.

Mary Beaton. I beseech you — for I
may not come.

Barbara. Now speaks Lord Shrewsbury but a word or twain;
And brieflier yet she answers, and stands up
As though to kneel, and pray.

Mary Beaton. I too have prayed:
God hear at last her prayers not less than mine,
Which failed not, sure, of hearing.

Barbara. Now draws nigh
That heretic priest, and bows himself, and thrice
Strives, as a man that sleeps in pain, to speak,
Stammering: she waves him by, as one whose prayers

She knows may naught avail her; now she kneels,
And the earls rebuke her, and she answers not,

Kneeling. O Christ, whose likeness there engraved
She strikes against her bosom, hear her! Now

That priest lifts up his voice against her prayer,
Praying; and a voice all round goes up with his:

But hers is lift up higher than climbs their cry,
In the great psalms of penitence; and now

She prays aloud in English; for the Pope
Our father, and his Church; and for her son,

And for the queen her murderess; and that God
May turn from England yet his wrath away;

And so forgives her enemies; and implores
High intercession of the saints with Christ,

Whom crucified she kisses on his cross,
And crossing now her breast — ah, heard you not?

*Even as thine arms were spread upon the cross,
So make thy grace, O Jesus, wide for me,
Receive me to thy mercy so, and so
Forgive my sins.*

Mary Beaton. So be it, if so God please.
Is she not risen up yet?

Barbara. Yea, but mine eyes
Darken: because those deadly twain close masked
Draw nigh as men that crave forgiveness, which
Gently she grants; *For now, she said, I hope*

You shall end all my troubles. Now meseems
They would put hand upon her as to help,

And disarray her raiment; but she smiles —
Heard you not that? can you nor hear nor speak,

Poor heart, for pain? *Truly, she said, my lords,
I never had such chamber-grooms before
As these to wait on me.*

Mary Beaton. An end, an end!
Barbara. Now come those twain upon the scaffold up
Whom she preferred before us; and she lays

Her crucifix down, which now the headsmen takes
Into his cursed hand, but being rebuked
Puts back for shame that sacred spoil of hers.

And now they lift her veil up from her head
Softly, and softly draw the black robe off,

And all in red as of a funeral flame
She stands up statelier yet before them,
tall

And clothed as if with sunset; and she takes
From Elspeth's hand the crimson sleeves, and draws

Their covering on her arms: and now those twain
Burst out aloud in weeping; and she speaks —

Weep not: I promised for you. Now she kneels;
And Jane binds round a kerchief on her eyes;

And smiling last her heavenliest smile on earth,

She waves a blind hand toward them,
 with *Farewell*,
Farewell, to meet again; and they come
 down,
 And leave her praying aloud, *In thee, O*
Lord,
I put my trust. And now, that psalm
 being through,
 She lays between the block and her soft
 neck
 Her long white peerless hands up ten-
 derly,
 Which now the headsman draws again
 away,
 But softly too. Now stir her lips
 again—

Into thine hands, O Lord, into thine hands,
Lord, I commend my spirit. And now—
 But now,
 Look you, not I, the last upon her.
Mary Beaton. Ha!
 He strikes awry: she stirs not. Nay,
 but now
 He strikes aright, and ends it.
Barbara. Hark, a cry!
Voice below. So perish all found ene-
 mies of the queen!
Another Voice. Amen!
Mary Beaton. I heard that very cry go
 up
 Far off long since to God, who answers
 here.

POEMS AND BALLADS.

A LEAVE-TAKING.

LET us go hence, my songs : she will not hear ;
Let us go hence together without fear.
Keep silence now, for singing-time is over,
And over all old things and all things dear.
She loves not you nor me as all we love her :
Yea, though we sang as angels in her ear,
She would not hear.

Let us rise up and part : she will not know.
Let us go seaward as the great winds go,
Full of blown sand and foam. What help is there ?
There is no help, for all these things are so,
And all the world is bitter as a tear.
And how these things are, though ye strove to show,
She would not know.

Let us go home and hence : she will not weep.
We gave love many dreams and days to keep,
Flowers without scent, and fruits that would not grow,
Saying, "If thou wilt, thrust in thy sickle, and reap."
All is reaped now ; no grass is left to mow :
And we that sowed, though all we fell on sleep,
She would not weep.

Let us go hence and rest : she will not love.
She shall not hear us if we sing hence-of,
Nor see love's ways, how sore they are and steep.
Come hence, let be, lie still ; it is enough.
Love is a barren sea, bitter and deep ;
And, though she saw all heaven in flower above,
She would not love.

Let us give up, go down : she will not care.
Though all the stars made gold of all the air,
And the sea moving saw before it move
One moon-flower making all the foam-flowers fair ;
Though all those waves went over us, and drove
Deep down the stifling lips and drowning hair, —
She would not care.

Let us go hence, go hence : she will not see.
Sing all once more together ; surely she,
She too, remembering days and words that were,
Will turn a little toward us, sighing ; but we,
We are hence, we are gone, as though we had not been there.
Nay, and though all men seeing had pity on me,
She would not see.

ITYLUS.

SWALLOW, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the
spring?

A thousand summers are over and
dead.

What hast thou found in the spring to
follow?

What hast thou found in thine heart
to sing?

What wilt thou do when the sum-
mer is shed?

O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the
south,

The soft south whither thine heart
is set?

Shall not the grief of the old time fol-
low?

Shall not the song thereof cleave to
thy mouth?

Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,
Thy way is long to the sun and the
south;

But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,
Shedding my song upon height, upon
hollow,

From tawny body and sweet small
mouth

Feed the heart of the night with
fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,
O swallow, sister, O changing swal-
low,

All spring through till the spring
be done,

Clothed with the light of the night on
the dew,

Sing, while the hours and the wild
birds follow,

Take flight and follow and find the
sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft, light swallow,
Though all things feast in the spring's
guest-chamber,

How hast thou heart to be glad
thereof yet?

For where thou fliest I shall not follow,
Till life forget, and death remember,
Till thou remember, and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,
I know not how thou hast heart to sing.
Hast thou the heart? is it all past
over?

Thy lord the summer is good to follow,
And fair the feet 'of thy lover the
spring;

But what wilt thou say to the spring
thy lover?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,
My heart in me is a molten ember,
And over my head the waves have
met.

But thou wouldst tarry, or I would fol-
low,

Could I forget, or thou remember,
Couldst thou remember, and I for-
get.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,
The heart's division divideth us.

Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;
But mine goes forth, among sea-gulfs
hollow,

To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
The feast of Daulis, the Thracian
sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,
I pray thee sing not a little space.

Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?
The woven web that was plain to fol-
low,

The small slain body, the flower-like
face,

Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!
The hands that cling and the feet
that follow,

The voice of the child's blood cry-
ing yet,

*Who hath remembered me? Who hath
forgotten?*

Thou hast forgotten, O summer swal-
low,

But the world shall end when I
forget.

RONDEL.

THESE many years since we began to be,
 What have the gods done with us? what
 with me,
 What with my love? They have shown
 me fates and fears,
 Harsh springs, and fountains bitter
 than the sea,
 Grief a fixed star, and joy a vane that
 veers,
 These many years.

With her, my love, with her have they
 done well?
 But who shall answer for her? who shall
 tell
 Sweet things or sad, such things as no
 man hears?
 May no tears fall, if no tears ever fell,
 From eyes more dear to me than star-
 riest spheres
 These many years!

But if tears ever touched, for any grief,
 Those eyelids folded like a white-rose
 leaf,
 Deep double shells wherethrough the
 eye-flower peers,
 Let them weep once more only, sweet
 and brief,
 Brief tears and bright, for one who gave
 her tears
 These many years.

A LITANY.

*ἐν οὐρανῷ φαεινὰς
 κρίψω παρ' ὑμῖν αὐγάς,
 μίαν πρὸς νύκτος ἐπὶ νύκτας ἴξετε, κ.τ.λ.
 Anth. Sac.*

FIRST ANTIPHONE.

ALL the bright lights of heaven
 I will make dark over thee;
 One night shall be as seven,
 That its skirts may cover thee;
 I will send on thy strong men a sword,
 On thy remnant a rod:
 Ye shall know that I am the Lord,
 Saith the Lord God.

SECOND ANTIPHONE.

All the bright lights of heaven
 Thou hast made dark over us;
 One night has been as seven,
 That its skirt might cover us;
 Thou hast sent on our strong men a
 sword,
 On our remnant a rod:
 We know that thou art the Lord,
 O Lord our God!

THIRD ANTIPHONE.

As the tresses and wings of the wind
 Are scattered and shaken,
 I will scatter all them that have sinned:
 There shall none be taken;
 As a sower that scattereth seed,
 So will I scatter them;
 As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,
 I will break and shatter them.

FOURTH ANTIPHONE.

As the wings and the locks of the wind
 Are scattered and shaken,
 Thou hast scattered all them that have
 sinned:
 There was no man taken;
 As a sower that scattereth seed,
 So hast thou scattered us;
 As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,
 Thou hast broken and shattered us.

FIFTH ANTIPHONE.

From all thy lovers that love thee,
 I God will sunder thee;
 I will make darkness above thee,
 And thick darkness under thee;
 Before me goeth a light,
 Behind me a sword:
 Shall a remnant find grace in my sight?
 I am the Lord.

SIXTH ANTIPHONE.

From all our lovers that love us,
 Thou God didst sunder us,
 Thou madest darkness above us,
 And thick darkness under us;
 Thou hast kindled thy wrath for a light,
 And made ready thy sword:
 Let a remnant find grace in thy sight,
 We beseech thee, O Lord!

SEVENTH ANTIPHONE.

Wilt thou bring fine gold for a payment
 For sins on this wise?
 For the glittering of raiment,
 And the shining of eyes,
 For the painting of faces,
 And the sundering of trust,
 For the sins of thine high places
 And delight of thy lust?

For your high things ye shall have lowly,
 Lamentation for song;
 For, behold, I God am holy,
 I the Lord am strong.
 Ye shall seek me, and shall not reach me
 Till the wine-press be trod;
 In that hour ye shall turn, and beseech
 me,
 Saith the Lord God.

EIGHTH ANTIPHONE.

Not with fine gold for a payment,
 But with coin of sighs,
 But with rending of raiment,
 And with weeping of eyes,
 But with shame of stricken faces,
 And with strewing of dust,
 For the sin of stately places
 And lordship of lust;

With voices of men made lowly,
 Made empty of song,
 O Lord God most holy,
 O God most strong,
 We reach out hands to reach thee
 Ere the wine-press be trod;
 We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech
 thee,
 O Lord our God!

NINTH ANTIPHONE.

In that hour thou shalt say to the night,
 Come down and cover us;
 To the cloud on thy left and thy right,
 Be thou spread over us.
 A snare shall be as thy mother,
 And a curse thy bride;
 Thou shalt put her away, and another
 Shall lie by thy side.

Thou shalt neither rise up by day,
 Nor lie down by night.
 Would God it were dark! thou shalt
 say;
 Would God it were light!
 And the sight of thine eyes shall be
 made
 As the burning of fire;
 And thy soul shall be sorely afraid
 For thy soul's desire.

Ye whom your Lords loved well,
 Putting silver and gold on you,
 The inevitable hell
 Shall surely take hold on you;
 Your gold shall be for a token,
 Your staff for a rod;
 With the breaking of bands ye are
 broken,
 Saith the Lord God.

TENTH ANTIPHONE.

In our sorrow we said to the night,
 Fall down and cover us;
 To the darkness at left and at right,
 Be thou shed over us.
 We had breaking of spirit to mother,
 And cursing to bride;
 And one was slain, and another
 Stood up at our side.

We could not arise by day,
 Nor lie down by night;
 Thy sword was sharp in our way,
 Thy word in our sight;
 The delight of our eyelids was made
 As the burning of fire,
 And our souls became sorely afraid
 For our soul's desire.

We whom the world loved well,
 Laving silver and gold on us,
 The kingdom of death and of hell
 Riseth up to take hold on us;
 Our gold is turned to a token,
 Our staff to a rod:
 Yet shalt thou bind them up that were
 broken,
 O Lord our God!

A LAMENTATION

Who hath known the ways of time,
Or viewed behind his feet?
There is no such man among men,
For change overtakes him, or time
Changes, for all things sweet
In time was bitter again.

Who shall give words enough,
Or unto the abundance of tears?
Who eyes are heavy with weeping,
And a word gone through mine ears,
A word, as a sword and fire,
For pain, for grief, for tears:
Who shall comfort me thereof,
Lest I die, being full of my fears?

Who hath known the ways and the ways
Of the sea?

The waters speak, the rock
And the sand shall cry:
The sea is the device of a god?
Who shall hiss, hiss, or hiss?

The two strongest prophets are mute,
The many speakers are still:
No foot has traced, or trod,
No hand has meted, his path,
Man's fate is a blossomed fruit,
And the mighty gods have their fill:
And relax not the rein, or the rod.

Ye were mighty in heart from of old,
Ye slew with the spear, and are slain
Keen after heat is the cold,
None after summer is rain,
And melteth man to the bone,
As water he weareth away,
As a flower, as an hour in a day,
Fallen from laughter to moan,
But my spirit is shaken with fear
Lest an evil thing begin,
New-born, a spear for a spear,
And one for another sin.
Or ever our tears began,
It was known from of old and said;
One law for a living man,
And another law for the dead
For these are fearful and sad,
Vain, and things without breath;
While he lives let a man be glad,
For none hath joy of his death.

Who shall answer the voice, the mid-way
Of the sea?

Of all the travail of the sea,
The many ways and waters, the many
Straits, the many swelling waves?
Who shall answer, who answer,
Grief, and we.

There is none shall see the face seen,
There is none he shall answer,
Through the sea, for a word have I
Seen.

I have reaped and sown,
I have seen the desire of mine eyes,
The beginning of love,
The season of kisses and signs,
And the end thereof.

I have known the ways of the sea,
All the dangerous ways:

Strange words have spoken with me,
And the tongues of strange days,
I have heaved the prize for ships:

Where steeds ran arrow,
I have seen from their bridled lips
Fiam blown as the snow.

With scattering of chariot-poles
And with straining of oars

I have grazed in the race the goals,
In the storm the shores:

As a grave is cleft with an arrow
At the joint of the knee,

I have cleft through the sea-straits
Narrow

To the heart of the sea.

When air was smitten in sunder,
I have watched on high

The ways of the stars and the thun-
der

In the night of the sky;
Where the dark brings forth light as a
flower,

As from lips that disserve;
One abideth the space of an hour,
One endureth forever.

Lo, what hath he seen or known
Of the way and the wave

Unbeholden, unsailed-on, unshown,
From the breast to the grave?

Or ever the stars were made, or skies,
Grief was born, and the kinless night,

Mother of gods without form or
name.
And light is born out of heaven, and
dies,
And one day knows not another's
light;
But night is one, and her shape the
same.
But dumb the goddesses underground
Wait, and we hear not on earth if their
feet
Rise, and the night wax loud with
their wings;
Dumb, without word or shadow of
sound;
And sift in scales, and winnow as
wheat
Men's souls, and sorrow of mani-
fold things.

III.

Nor less of grief than ours
The gods wrought long ago
To bruise men one by one;
But with the incessant hours
Fresh grief and greener woe
Spring, as the sudden sun
Year after year makes flowers;
And these die down and grow,
And the next year lacks none.

As these men sleep, have slept
The old heroes in time fled,
No dream-divided sleep;
And holier eyes have wept
Than ours, when on her dead
Gods have seen Thetis weep,
With heavenly hair far-swept
Back, heavenly hands out-spread
Round what she could not keep,

Could not one day withhold,
One night; and like as these
White ashes of no weight,
Held not his urn the cold
Ashes of Heracles?
For all things born, one gate
Opens, — no gate of gold;
Opens; and no man sees
Beyond the gods and fate.

ANIMA ANCEPS.

TILL death have broken
Sweet life's love-token,
Till all be spoken
That shall be said,
What dost thou praying,
O soul, and playing
With song and saying,
Things flown and fled?
For this we know not —
That fresh springs flow not
And fresh griefs grow not
When men are dead;
When strange years cover
Lover and lover,
And joys are over,
And tears are shed.

If one day's sorrow
Mar the day's morrow;
If man's life borrow,
And man's death pay;
If souls once taken,
If lives once shaken,
Arise, awaken,
By night, by day, —
Why with strong crying
And years of sighing,
Living and dying,
Fast ye and pray?
For all your weeping,
Waking and sleeping,
Death comes to reaping,
And takes away.
Though time rend after
Roof-tree from rafter,
A little laughter
Is much more worth
Than thus to measure
The hour, the treasure,
The pain, the pleasure,
The death, the birth;
Grief, when days alter,
Like joy shall falter;
Song-book and psalter,
Mourning and mirth.
Live like the swallow;
Seek not to follow,
Where earth is hollow,
Under the earth.

SONG BEFORE DEATH.

(FROM THE FRENCH.)

1795

SWEET mother, in a minute's span
 Death parts thee and my love of thee :
 Sweet love, that yet art living man,
 Come back, true love, to comfort me.
 Back, ah, come back ! ah, wellaway !
 But my love comes not any day.

As roses, when the warm West blows,
 Break to full flower, and sweeten
 spring,
 My soul would break to a glorious rose
 In such wise at his whispering.
 In vain I listen ; wellaway !
 My love says nothing any day.

You that will weep for pity of love
 On the low place where I am lain,
 I pray you, having wept enough,
 Tell him for whom I bore such pain
 That he was yet, ah ! wellaway !
 My true love to my dying day.

. ROCOCO.

TAKE hands, and part with laughter ;
 Touch lips, and part with tears ;
 Once more and no more after,
 Whatever comes with years.
 We twain shall not re-measure
 The ways that left us twain,
 Nor crush the lees of pleasure
 From sanguine grapes of pain.

We twain once well in sunder,
 What will the mad gods do
 For hate with me, I wonder,
 Or what for love with you ?
 Forget them till November,
 And dream there's April yet ;
 Forget that I remember, //
 And dream that I forget. //

Time found our tired love sleeping,
 And kissed away his breath ;
 But what should we do weeping,
 Though light love sleep to death ?

We have drained his lips at leisure,
 Till there's not left to drain
 A single sob of pleasure,
 A single pulse of pain.

Dream that the lips once breathless
 Might quicken if they would ;
 Say that the soul is deathless ;
 Dream that the gods are good ;
 Say March may wed September,
 And time divorce regret :
 But not that you remember,
 And not that I forget.

We have heard from hidden places
 What love scarce lives and bears ;
 We have seen on fervent faces
 The pallor of strange tears ;
 We have trod the wine-vat's treasure,
 Whence, ripe to steam and stain,
 Foams round the feet of pleasure
 The blood-red must of pain. 7 1/2 ?

Remembrance may recover,
 And time bring back to time
 The name of your first lover,
 The ring of my first rhyme ;
 But rose-leaves of December
 The frosts of June shall fret,
 The day that you remember,
 The day that I forget.

The snake that hides and hisses
 In heaven, we twain have known
 The grief of cruel kisses,
 The joy whose mouth makes moan ;
 The pulse's pause and measure,
 Where in one furtive vein
 Throbs through the heart of pleasure
 The purpler blood of pain.

We have done with tears and treasons
 And love for treason's sake ;
 Room for the swift new seasons,
 The years that burn and break.
 Dismantle and dismember
 Men's days and dreams, Juliette ;
 For love may not remember,
 But time will not forget.

Life treads down love in flying,
 Time withers him at root ;
 Bring all dead things and dying,
 Reaped sheaf and ruined fruit,

Where, crushed by three days' pressure,
Our three days' love lies slain;
And earlier leaf of pleasure,
And latter flower of pain.

Breathe close upon the ashes,
It may be flame will leap;
Unclose the soft close lashes,
Lift up the lids, and weep.
Light love's extinguished ember,
Let one tear leave it wet,
For one that you remember,
And ten that you forget.

A BALLAD OF BURDENS.

THE burden of fair women. Vain delight,
And love self-slain in some sweet shameful way,
And sorrowful old age that comes by night
As a thief comes that has no heart by day,
And change that finds fair cheeks and leaves them gray,
And weariness that keeps awake for hire,
And grief that says what pleasure used to say:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bought kisses. This is sore,
A burden without fruit in childbearing;
Between the nightfall and the dawn threescore,
Threescore between the dawn and evening.
The shuddering in thy lips, the shuddering
In thy sad eyelids tremulous like fire,
Makes love seem shameful and a wretched thing:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sweet speeches. Nay, kneel down,
Cover thy head, and weep; for verily

These market-men that buy thy white and brown
In the last days shall take no thought for thee;
In the last days like earth thy face shall be,
Yea, like sea-marsh made thick with brine and mire,
Sad with sick leavings of the sterile sea:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of long living. Thou shalt fear
Waking, and sleeping mourn upon thy bed;
And say at night, "Would God the day were here!"
And say at dawn, "Would God the day were dead!"
With weary days thou shalt be clothed and fed,
And wear remorse of heart for thine attire,
Pain for thy girdle, and sorrow upon thine head:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bright colors. Thou shalt see
Gold tarnished, and the gray above the green;
And as the thing thou seest thy face shall be,
And no more as the thing beforetime seen.
And thou shalt say of mercy, "It hath been;"
And living, watch the old lips and loves expire,
And talking, tears shall take thy breath between:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sad sayings. In that day
Thou shalt tell all thy days and hours, and tell
Thy times and ways and words of love, and say
How one was dear, and one desirable,

And sweet was life to hear and sweet
to smell;
But now with lights reverse the old
hours retire,
And the last hour is shod with fire
from hell:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of four seasons. Rain in
spring,
White rain and wind among the ten-
der trees;

A summer of green sorrows gather-
ing;

Rank autumn in a mist of miseries,
With sad face set towards the year,
that sees

The charred ash drop out of the drop-
ping pyre,

And winter wan with many mala-
dies;

This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of dead faces. Out of sight
And out of love, beyond the reach of
hands,

Changed in the changing of the dark
and light,

They walk and weep about the bar-
ren lands

Where no seed is, nor any garner
stands,

Where in short breaths the doubtful
days respire,

And time's turned glass lets through
the sighing sands:

This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of much gladness. Life
and lust

Forsake thee, and the face of thy de-
light;

And underfoot the heavy hour strews
dust,

And overhead strange weathers burn
and bite;

And where the red was, lo the blood-
less white;

And where truth was, the likeness of a
liar;

And where day was, the likeness of
the night:

This is the end of every man's desire.

L'ENVOY.

Princes, and ye whom pleasure quick-
eneth,
Heed well this rhyme before your
pleasure tire;
For life is sweet, but after life is death.
This is the end of every man's desire.

BEFORE THE MIRROR.

(VERSES WRITTEN UNDER A PICTURE.)

INSCRIBED TO J. A. WHISTLER.

I.

WHITE rose in red rose-garden
Is not so white;
Snowdrops that plead for pardon
And pine for fright
Because the hard East blows
Over their maiden rows,
Grow not as this face grows from
pale to bright.

Behind the veil, forbidden,
Shut up from sight,
Love, is there sorrow hidden,
Is there delight?
Is joy thy dower or grief,
White rose of weary leaf,
Late rose whose life is brief, whose
loves are light?

Soft snows, that hard winds harden
Till each flake bite,
Fill all the flowerless garden
Whose flowers took flight
Long since when summer ceased,
And men rose up from feast,
And warm west wind grew east, and
warm day night.

II.

"Come snow, come wind or thunder
High up in air,
I watch my face, and wonder
At my bright hair;
Naught else exalts or grieves
The rose at heart, that heaves
With love of her own leaves and lips
that pair.

"She knows not loves that kissed her
 She knows not where :
 Art thou the ghost, my sister,
 White sister there,
 Am I the ghost, who knows ?
 My hand, a fallen rose,
 Lies snow-white on white snows, and
 takes no care.

"I cannot see what pleasures
 Or what pains were ;
 What pale new loves and treasures
 New years will bear ;
 What beam will fall, what shower,
 What grief or joy for dower :
 But one thing knows the flower, — the
 flower is fair."

III.

Glad, but not flushed with gladness,
 Since joys go by ;
 Sad, but not bent with sadness,
 Since sorrows die ;
 Deep in the gleaming glass
 She sees all past things pass,
 And all sweet life that was lie down
 and lie.

There glowing ghosts of flowers
 Draw down, draw nigh ;
 And wings of swift spent hours
 Take flight and fly ;
 She sees by formless gleams,
 She hears across cold streams,
 Dead mouths of many dreams that
 sing and sigh.

Face fallen and white throat lifted,
 With sleepless eye
 She sees old loves that drifted,
 She knew not why, —
 Old loves and faded fears
 Float down a stream that hears
 The flowing of all men's tears beneath
 the sky.

IN MEMORY OF WALTER
SAVAGE LANDOR.

BACK to the flower-town, side by side,
 The bright months bring,
 New-born, the bridegroom and the bride,
 Freedom and spring.

The sweet land laughs from sea to sea,
 Filled full of sun ;
 All things come back to her, being
 free, —
 All things but one.

In many a tender wheaten plot
 Flowers that were dead
 Live, and old suns revive ; but not
 That holier head.

By this white wandering waste of sea,
 Far north, I hear
 One face shall never turn to me
 As once this year ;

Shall never smile and turn and rest
 On mine as there,
 Nor one most sacred hand be prest
 Upon my hair.

I came as one whose thoughts half lin
 ger,
 Half run before ;
 The youngest to the oldest singer
 That England bore.

I found him whom I shall not find
 Till all grief end,
 In holiest age our mightiest mind,
 Father and friend.

But thou, if any thing endure,
 If hope there be,
 O spirit that man's life left pure,
 Man's death set free,

Not with disdain of days that were
 Look earthward now :
 Let dreams revive the reverend hair,
 The imperial brow ;

Come back in sleep, for in the life
 Where thou art not
 We find none like thee. Time and strife
 And the world's lot

Move thee no more ; but love at least,
 And reverent heart,
 May move thee, royal and released,
 Soul, as thou art.

And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
 Receive and keep,
 Keep safe his dedicated dust,
 His sacred sleep.

So shall thy lovers, come from far,
 Mix with thy name,
 As morning-star with evening-star,
 His faultless fame.

A SONG IN TIME OF ORDER.
 1852.

PUSH hard across the sand,
 For the salt wind gathers breath;
 Shoulder and wrist and hand,
 Push hard as the push of death.

The wind is as iron that rings,
 The foam-heads loosen and flee;
 It swells and welters and swings,
 The pulse of the tide of the sea.

And up on the yellow cliff
 The long corn flickers and shakes;
 Push, for the wind holds stiff,
 And the gunwale dips and rakes.

Good hap to the fresh fierce weather,
 The quiver and beat of the sea!
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

Out to the sea with her there,
 Out with her over the sand,
 Let the kings keep the earth for their
 share!
 We have done with the sharers of
 land.

They have tied the world in a tether,
 They have bought over God with a
 fee;
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

We have done with the kisses that sting,
 The thief's mouth red from the feast,
 The blood on the hands of the king,
 And the lie at the lips of the priest.

Will they tie the winds in a tether,
 Put a bit in the jaws of the sea?
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

Let our flag run out straight in the wind!
 The old red shall be floated again
 When the ranks that are thin shall be
 thinned,
 When the names that were twenty are
 ten;

When the devil's riddle is mastered,
 And the galley-bench creaks with a
 Pope,
 We shall see Buonaparte the bastard
 Kick heels with his throat in a rope.

While the shepherd sets wolves on his
 sheep,
 And the emperor halts his kine,
 While Shame is a watchman asleep,
 And Faith is a keeper of swine, —

Let the wind shake our flag like a
 feather,
 Like the plumes of the foam of the
 sea!

While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

All the world has its burdens to bear,
 From Cayenne to the Austrian whips;
 Forth, with the rain in our hair
 And the salt sweet foam in our lips:

In the teeth of the hard glad weather,
 In the blown wet face of the sea;
 While three men hold together,
 The kingdoms are less by three.

A SONG IN TIME OF REVOLU-
 TION. 1860.

The heart of the rulers is sick, and the
 high-priest covers his head,
 For this is the song of the quick that is
 heard in the ears of the dead.

<p>The poor and the halt and the blind are keen and mighty and fleet: Like the noise of the blowing of wind is the sound of the noise of their feet.</p>	<p>Set a word in thy lips, to stand before God with a word in thy mouth: 'That' the rain shall return in the land, and the tender dew after drouth."</p>
<p>The wind has the sound of a laugh in the clamor of days and of deeds: The priests are scattered like chaff, and the rulers broken like reeds.</p>	<p>But the arm of the elders is broken, their strength is unbound and undone: They wait for a sign of a token; they cry, and there cometh none.</p>
<p>The high-priest sick from qualms, with his raiment bloodily dashed; The thief with branded palms, and the liar with cheeks abashed.</p>	<p>Their moan is in every place, the cry of them filleth the land: There is shame in the sight of their face, there is fear in the thews of their hand.</p>
<p>They are smitten, they tremble greatly, they are pained for their pleasant things: For the house of the priests made state- ly, and the might in the mouth of the kings.</p>	<p>They are girdled about the reins with a curse for the girdle thereon: For the noise of the rending of chains, the face of their color is gone.</p>
<p>They are grieved and greatly afraid; they are taken, they shall not flee: For the heart of the nations is made as the strength of the springs of the sea.</p>	<p>For the sound of the shouting of men, they are grievously stricken at heart: They are smitten asunder with pain, their bones are smitten apart.</p>
<p>They were fair in the grace of gold, they walked with delicate feet; They were clothed with the cunning of old, and the smell of their gar- ments was sweet.</p>	<p>There is none of them all that is whole; their lips gape open for breath: They are clothed with sickness of soul, and the shape of the shadow of death.</p>
<p>For the breaking of gold in their hair they halt as a man made lame: They are utterly naked and bare; their mouths are bitter with shame.</p>	<p>The wind is thwart in their feet; it is full of the shouting of mirth; As one shaketh the sides of a sheet, so it shaketh the ends of the earth.</p>
<p>Wilt thou judge thy people now, O king that wast found most wise? Wilt thou lie any more, O thou whose mouth is emptied of lies?</p>	<p>The sword, the sword is made keen; the iron has opened its mouth; The corn is red that was green; it is bound for the sheaves of the south.</p>
<p>Shall God make a pact with thee, till his hook be found in thy sides? Wilt thou put back the time of the sea, or the place of the season of tides?</p>	<p>The sound of a word was shed, the sound of the wind as a breath, In the ears of the souls that were dead, in the dust of the deepness of death;</p>

Where the face of the moon is taken,
The ways of the stars undone,
The light of the whole sky shaken, the
light of the face of the sun;

Where the waters are emptied and broken,
the waves of the waters are
stayed;

Where God has bound for a token the
darkness that maketh afraid;

Where the sword was covered and hidden,
and dust had grown in its
side,

A word came forth that was bidden, the
crying of one that cried:

The sides of the two-edged sword shall
be bare, and its mouth shall be
red,

For the breath of the face of the Lord
that is felt in the bones of the
dead.

TO VICTOR HUGO.

IN the fair days when god
By man as godlike trod,
And each alike was Greek, alike was
free,

God's lightning spared, they said,
Alone the happier head
Whose laurels screened it; fruitless
grace for thee

To whom the high gods gave of right
Their thunders and their laurels and
their light.

Sunbeams and bays before
Our master's servants wore,
For these Apollo left in all men's lands;
But far from these ere now,
And watched with jealous brow,
Lay the blind lightnings shut between
God's hands,

And only loosed on slaves and kings
The terror of the tempest of their
wings.

Born in those younger years
That shone with storms of spears,

And shook in the wind blown from a
dead world's pyre,
When by her back-blown hair
Napoleon caught the fair
And fierce Republic with her feet of
fire,
And stayed with iron words and hands
Her flight, and freedom in a thousand
lands:

Thou sawest the tides of things
Close over heads of kings,
And thine hand felt the thunder, and to
thee

Laurels and lightnings were
As sunbeams and soft air
Mixed each in other, or as mist with sea
Mixed, or as memory with desire,
Or the lute's pulses with the louder lyre.

For thee man's spirit stood
Disrobed of flesh and blood,
And bare the heart of the most secret
hours;

And to thine hand more tame
Than birds in winter came
High hopes and unknown flying forms
of powers,

And from thy table fed, and sang
Till with the tune men's ears took fire
and rang.

Even all men's eyes and ears
With fiery sound and tears
Waxed hot, and cheeks caught flame
and eyelids light,

At those high songs of thine
That stung the sense like wine,
Or fell more soft than dew or snow by
night,

Or wailed as in some flooded cave
Sobs the strong broken spirit of a wave.

But we, our master, we
Whose hearts, uplift to thee,
Ache with the pulse of thy remembered
song,—

We ask not nor await
From the clinched hands of fate,
As thou, remission of the world's old
wrong;

Respite we ask not, nor release:
Freedom a man may have, he shall not
peace.

Though thy most fiery hope
 Storm heaven, to set wide ope
 The all-sought-for gate whence God or
 chance debars
 All feet of men, all eyes —
 The old night resumes her skies,
 Her hollow hiding-place of clouds and
 stars,
 Where naught save these is sure in
 sight,
 And, paven with death, our days are
 roofed with night.

One thing we can : to be
 Awhile, as men may, free ;
 But not by hope or pleasure the most
 stern
 Goddess, most awful-eyed,
 Sits, but on either side
 Sits sorrow and the wrath of hearts that
 burn,
 Sad faith that cannot hope or fear,
 And memory gray with many a flower-
 less year.

Not that in stranger's wise
 I lift not loving eyes
 To the fair foster-mother France, that
 gave
 Beyond the pale fleet foam
 Help to my sires and home ;
 Whose great sweet breast could shelter
 those and save
 Whom from her nursing breasts and
 hands
 Their land cast forth of old on gentler
 lands.

Not without thoughts that ache
 For theirs and for thy sake,
 I, born of exiles, hail thy banished head ;
 I, whose young song took flight
 Toward the great heat and light
 On me a child from thy far splendor
 shed,
 From thine high place of soul and
 song,
 Which, fallen on eyes yet feeble, made
 them strong.

Ah ! not with lessening love
 For memories born hereof,

I look to that sweet mother-land, and
 see
 The old fields and fair full streams,
 And skies, but fled like dreams
 The feet of freedom and the thought of
 thee ;
 And all between the skies and graves
 The mirth of mockers and the shame
 of slaves.

She, killed with noisome air,
 Even she ! and still so fair,
 Who said, " Let there be freedom," and
 there was
 Freedom ; and as a lance
 The fiery eyes of France
 Touched the world's sleep, and as a
 sleep made pass
 Forth of men's heavier ears and eyes
 Smitten with fire and thunder from new
 skies.

Are they men's friends indeed
 Who watch them weep and bleed ?
 Because thou hast loved us, shall the
 gods love thee ?
 Thou, first of men and friend,
 Seest thou, even thou, the end ?
 Thou knowest what hath been, knowest
 thou what shall be ?
 Evils may pass and hopes endure ;
 But fate is dim, and all the gods obscure.

O nursed in airs apart,
 O poet highest of heart,
 Hast thou seen time, who hast seen so
 many things ?
 Are not the years more wise,
 More sad than keenest eyes,
 The years with soundless feet and sound-
 ing wings ?
 Passing we hear them not, but past
 The clamor of them thrills us, and their
 blast.

Thou art chief of us, and lord ;
 Thy song is as a sword
 Keen-edged and scented in the blade
 from flowers ;
 Thou art lord and king ; but we
 Lift younger eyes, and see
 Less of high hope, less light on wan-
 dering hours ;

Hours that have borne men down so long,
Seen the right fail, and watched uplift
the wrong.

But thine imperial soul,
As years and ruins roll
To the same end, and all things and all
dreams

With the same wreck and roar
Drift on the dim same shore,
Still in the bitter foam and brackish
streams

Tracks the fresh water-spring to be,
And sudden sweeter fountains in the
sea.

As once the high god bound
With many a rivet round
Man's savior, and with iron nailed him
through,

At the wild end of things,
Where even his own bird's wings
Flagged, whence the sea shone like a
drop of dew,

From Caucasus beheld below
Past fathoms of unfathomable snow :

So the strong God, the chance
Central of circumstance,
Still shows him exile who will not be
slave ;

All thy great fame and thee
Girt by the dim strait sea
With multitudinous walls of wandering
wave ;

Shows us our greatest from his throne
Fate-stricken, and rejected of his own.

Yea, he is strong, thou say'st,
A mystery many-faced,
The wild beasts know him, and the wild
birds flee ;

The blind night sees him, death
Shrinks beaten at his breath,
And his right hand is heavy on the sea :
We know he hath made us, and is
king ;

We know not if he care for any thing.

Thus much, no more, we know
He bade what is, be so,

Bade light be, and bade night be, one
by one ;

Bade hope and fear, bade ill
And good redeem and kill,
Till all men be weary of the sun,
And this world burn in its own flame.
And bear no witness longer of his name.

Yet though all this be thus,
Be those men praised of us
Who have loved and wrought and sor-
rowed, and not sinned

For fame or fear or gold,
Nor waxed for winter cold,
Nor changed for changes of the worldly
wind ;

Praised above men of men be these,
Till this one world and work we know
shall cease.

Yea, one thing more than this,
We know that one thing is,
The splendor of a spirit without blame,
That not the laboring years
Blind-born, nor any fears,
Nor men nor any gods can tire or tame ;
But purer power with fiery breath
Fills, and exalts above the gulfs of death.

Praised above men be thou,
Whose laurel-laden brow,
Made for the morning, droops not in the
night ;

Praised and beloved, that none
Of all thy great things done
Flies higher than thy most equal spirit's
flight ;

Praised, that nor doubt nor hope
could bend
Earth's loftiest head, found upright to
the end.

BEFORE DAWN.

SWEET life, if life were stronger,
Earth clear of years that wrong her,
Then two things might live longer,
Two sweeter things than they,—
Delight, the rootless flower,
And love, the bloomless bower ;
Delight that lives an hour,
And love that lives a day.

From evensong to daytime,
When April melts in Maytime,
Love lengthens out his playtime,
Love lessens breath by breath,
And kiss by kiss grows older
On listless throat or shoulder
Turned sideways now, turned colder
Than life that dreams of death.

This one thing once worth giving
Life gave, and seemed worth living;
Sin sweet beyond forgiving
And brief beyond regret:
To laugh and love together,
And weave with foam and feather
And wind and words the tether
Our memories play with yet.

Ah! one thing worth beginning,
One thread in life worth spinning,
Ah, sweet, one sin worth sinning
With all the whole soul's will;
To lull you till one stilled you,
To kiss you till one killed you,
To feed you till one filled you,
Sweet lips, if love could fill;

To hunt sweet Love, and lose him
Between white arms and bosom,
Between the bud and blossom,
Between your throat and chin;
To say of shame — what is it?
Of virtue — we can miss it;
Of sin — we can but kiss it,
And it's no longer sin;

To feel the strong soul, stricken
Through fleshly pulses, quicken
Beneath swift sighs that thicken,
Soft hands and lips that smite;
Lips that no love can tire,
With hands that sting like fire,
Weaving the web Desire
To snare the bird Delight.

But love so lightly plighted,
Our love with torch unlighted,
Paused near us unafrighted,
Who found and left him free:
None, seeing us cloven in sunder,
Will weep or laugh or wonder;
Light love stands clear of thunder,
And safe from winds at sea.

As, when late larks give warning
Of dying lights and dawning,
Night murmurs to the morning,
"Lie still, O love, lie still;"
And half her dark limbs cover
The white limbs of her lover,
With amorous plumes that hover
And fervent lips that chill;

As scornful day represses
Night's void and vain caresses,
And from her cloudier tresses
Unwinds the gold of his,
With limbs from limbs dividing,
And breath by breath subsiding;
For love has no abiding,
But dies before the kiss:

So hath it been, so be it;
For who shall live and flee it?
But look that no man see it
Or hear it unaware;
Lest all who love and choose him
See Love, and so refuse him;
For all who find him lose him,
But all have found him fair.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE.

HERE, where the world is quiet,
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest time and mowing,
A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep,
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers,
And every thing but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
Weak ships and spirits steer;

They are so old, so old, so old,
 They are so old, so old, so old;
 And we have seen them grow here.

So green, so green, so green,
 So green, so green, so green,
 For the green, so green, so green,
 For the green, so green, so green,
 For the green, so green, so green,
 Where no leaf, no leaf, no leaf,
 Save this whereat she crushes
 For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
 In fruitless fields of corn,
 They bow themselves and slumber
 All night till light is born;
 And like a soul belated,
 In hell and heaven unmated,
 By cloud and mist abated
 Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
 He too with death shall dwell,
 Nor wake with wings in heaven,
 Nor weep for pains in hell;
 Though one were fair as roses,
 His beauty clouds and closes;
 And well though love reposes,
 In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
 Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
 Who gathers all things mortal
 With cold immortal hands;
 Her languid lips are sweeter
 Than love's who fears to greet her
 To men that mix and meet her
 From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
 She waits for all men born;
 Forgets the earth her mother,
 The life of fruits and corn;
 And spring and seed and swallow
 Take wing for her, and follow
 Where summer song rings hollow,
 And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
 The old loves with wearier wings;

And a' dead years draw thicker,
 And a' disastrous things;
 Dead dreams of days forsaken,
 Kind words that snows have shaken,
 Wild leaves that winds have taken,
 Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
 And joy was never sure;
 To-day will die to-morrow;
 Time stoops to no man's lure;
 And love, grown faint and fretful,
 With lips but half regretful
 Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
 Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
 From hope and fear set free,
 We thank with brief thanksgiving
 Whatever gods may be
 That no life-lives forever;
 That dead men rise up never;
 That even the weariest river
 Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
 Nor any change of light;
 Nor sound of waters shaken,
 Nor any sound or sight;
 Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
 Nor days nor things diurnal:
 Only the sleep eternal
 In an eternal night.

● LOVE AT SEA.

We are in love's land to-day:
 Where shall we go?
 Love, shall we start or stay,
 Or sail or row?
 There's many a wind and way,
 And never a May but May;
 We are in love's hand to-day;
 Where shall we go?

Our land-wind is the breath
 Of sorrows kissed to death,
 And joys that were;
 Our ballast is a rose;
 Our way lies where God knows,
 And love knows where.
 We are in love's hand to-day—

Our seamen are fledged Loves,
 Our masts are bills of doves,
 Our decks fine gold;
 Our ropes are dead maids' hair,
 Our stores are love-shafts fair
 And manifold.
 We are in love's land to-day —

Where shall we land you, sweet?
 On fields of strange men's feet,
 Or fields near home?
 Or where the fire-flowers blow,
 Or where the flowers of snow,
 Or flowers of foam?
 We are in love's hand to-day —

Land me, she says, where love
 Shows but one shaft, one dove,
 One heart, one hand.
 — A shore like that, my dear,
 Lies where no man will steer,
 No maiden land.
Imitated from Théophile Gautier.

APRIL.

FROM THE FRENCH OF THE VIDAME
 DE CHARTRES. 12—?

WHEN the fields catch flower,
 And the underwood is green,
 And from bower unto bower
 The songs of the birds begin,
 I sing with sighing between.
 When I laugh and sing,
 I am heavy at heart for my sin;
 I am sad in the spring
 For my love that I shall not win,
 For a foolish thing.

This profit I have of my woe,
 That I know, as I sing,
 I know he will needs have it so
 Who is master and king,
 Who is lord of the spirit of spring.
 I will serve her, and will not spare
 Till her pity awake
 Who is good, who is pure, who is fair,
 Even her for whose sake
 Love hath ta'en me and slain unaware.

O my lord, O Love,
 I have laid my life at thy feet;
 Have thy will thereof,
 Do as it please thee with it,
 For what shall please thee is sweet.
 I am come unto thee
 To do thee service, O Love!
 Yet cannot I see
 Thou wilt take any pity thereof,
 Any mercy on me.

But the grace I have long time sought
 Comes never in sight,
 If in her it abideth not,
 Through thy mercy and might,
 Whose heart is the world's delight.
 Thou hast sworn without fail I shall die,
 For my heart is set
 On what hurts me, I wot not why,
 But cannot forget
 What I love, what I sing for and sigh.

She is worthy of praise;
 For this grief of her giving is worth
 All the joy of my days
 That lie between death's day and
 birth,
 All the lordship of things upon earth.
 Nay, what have I said?
 I would not be glad if I could:
 My dream and my dread
 Are of her, and for her sake I would
 That my life were fled.

Lo, sweet, if I durst not pray to you,
 Then were I dead;
 If I sang not a little to say to you,
 (Could it be said)
 O my love, how my heart would be
 fed;
 Ah, sweet who hast hold of my heart,
 For thy love's sake I live;
 Do but tell me, ere either depart,
 What a lover may give
 For a woman so fair as thou art.

The lovers that disbelieve,
 False rumors shall grieve
 And evil-speaking shall part.

BEFORE PARTING.

A MONTH or twain to live on honey-comb

Is pleasant; but one tires of scented time,

Cold sweet recurrence of accepted rhyme,

And that strong purple under juice and foam

Where the wine's heart has burst;
Nor feel the latter kisses like the first.

Once yet, this poor one time: I will not pray

Even to change the bitterness of it,
The bitter taste ensuing on the sweet,

To make your tears fall where your soft hair lay

All blurred and heavy in some perfumed wise

Over my face and eyes.

And yet who knows what end the scythèd wheat

Makes of its foolish poppies' mouths of red?

These were not sown, these are not harvested,

They grow a month, and are cast under feet,

And none has care thereof,
As none has care of a divided love.

I know each shadow of your lips by rote,

Each change of love in eyelids and eyebrows;

The fashion of fair temples tremulous

With tender blood, and color of your throat;

I know not how love is gone out of this,
Seeing that all was his.

Love's likeness there endures upon all these:

But out of these one shall not gather love.

Day hath not strength nor the night shade enough

To make love whole, and fill his lips with ease,

As some bee-builed cell
Feels at filled lips the heavy honey swell.

I know not how this last month leaves your hair

Less full of purple color and hid spice,
And that luxurious trouble of closed eyes

Is mixed with meaner shadow and waste care;

And love, kissed out by pleasure, seems not yet

Worth patience to regret.

THE SUNDEW.

A LITTLE marsh-plant, yellow green,
And pricked at lip with tender red.

Tread close, and either way you tread
Some faint black water jets between

Lest you should bruise the curious head

A live thing may be; who shall know?
The summer knows and suffers it;

For the cool moss is thick and sweet
Each side, and saves the blossom so

That it lives out the long June heat.

The deep scent of the heather burns
About it: breathless though it be,

Bow down and worship; more than we
Is the least flower whose life returns,

Least weed renascent in the sea.

We are vexed and cumbered in earth's sight

With wants, with many memories:
These see their mother what she is,

Glad-growing, till August leave more bright

The apple-colored cranberries.

Wind blows and bleaches the strong grass,

Blown all one way to shelter it
From trample of strayed kine, with feet

Felt heavier than the moorhen was,
Strayed up past patches of wild wheat.

You call it sundew : how it grows,
 If with its color it have breath,
 If life taste sweet to it, if death
 Pain its soft petal, no man knows :
 Man has no sight or sense that saith.

My sundew, grown of gentle days,
 In these green miles the spring begun
 Thy growth ere April had half done
 With the soft secret of her ways,
 Or June made ready for the sun.

O red-lipped mouth of marsh-flower !
 I have a secret halved with thee.
 The name that is love's name to me
 Thou knowest, and the face of her
 Who is my festival to see.

The hard sun, as thy petals knew,
 Colored the heavy moss-water :
 Thou wert not worth green midsummer,
 Nor fit to live to August blue,
 O sundew, not remembering her.

AN INTERLUDE.

IN the greenest growth of the Maytime,
 I rode where the woods were wet,
 Between the dawn and the daytime :
 The spring was glad that we met.

There was something the season wanted,
 Though the ways and the woods smelt
 sweet,—
 The breath at your lips that panted,
 The pulse of the grass at your feet.

You came, and the sun came after,
 And the green grew golden above ;
 And the flag-flowers lightened with
 laughter,
 And the meadow-sweet shook with
 love.

Your feet in the full-grown grasses
 Moved soft as a weak wind blows :
 You passed me as April passes,
 With face made out of a rose.

By the stream where the stems were
 slender,
 Your bright foot paused at the sedge :

It might be to watch the tender
 Light leaves in the springtime hedge,

On boughs that the sweet month
 blanches
 With flowery frost of May ;
 It might be a bird in the branches ;
 It might be a thorn in the way.

I waited to watch you linger
 With foot drawn back from the dew,
 Till a sunbeam straight like a finger
 Struck sharp through the leaves at
 you.

And a bird overhead sang *Follow*,
 And a bird to the right sang *Here* ;
 And the arch of the leaves was hol-
 low,
 And the meaning of May was clear.

I saw where the sun's hand pointed,
 I knew what the bird's note said :
 By the dawn and the dewfall anointed,
 You were queen by the gold on your
 head.

As the glimpse of a burnt-out ember
 Recalls a regret of the sun,
 I remember, forget, and remember
 What Love saw done and undone.

I remember the way we parted,
 The day and the way we met :
 You hoped we were both broken-
 hearted,
 And knew we should both forget.

And May with her world in flower
 Seemed still to murmur and smile
 As you murmured and smiled for an
 hour :
 I saw you turn at the stile.

A hand like a white wood-blossom
 You lifted, and waved, and passed,
 With head hung down to the bosom,
 And pale, as it seemed, at last.

And the best and the worst of this is,
 That neither is most to blame,
 If you've forgotten my kisses,
 And I've forgotten your name.

HENDECASYLLABICS.

IN the month of the long decline of
 roses,
 I, beholding the summer dead before
 me,
 Set my face to the sea, and journeyed
 silent,
 Gazing eagerly where above the sea-
 mark
 Flame as fierce as the fervid eyes of
 lions
 Half divided the eyelids of the sun-
 set;
 Till I heard as it were a noise of waters
 Moving tremulous under feet of angels
 Multitudinous, out of all the heavens;
 Knew the fluttering wind, the fluttered
 foliage,
 Shaken fitfully, full of sound and
 shadow;
 And saw, trodden upon by noiseless
 angels,
 Long mysterious reaches fed with
 moonlight,
 Sweet sad straits in a soft subsiding
 channel,
 Blown about by the lips of winds I knew
 not,
 Winds not born in the north nor any
 quarter,
 Winds not warm with the south nor any
 sunshine;
 Heard between them a voice of exulta-
 tion,
 "Lo, the summer is dead, the sun is
 faded,
 Even like as a leaf the year is withered,
 All the fruits of the day from all her
 branches
 Gathered, neither is any left to gather.
 All the flowers are dead, the tender
 blossoms,
 All are taken away; the season wasted,
 Like an ember among the fallen ashes.
 Now with light of the winter days, with
 moonlight,
 Light of snow, and the bitter light of
 hoar-frost,
 We bring flowers that fade not after
 autumn,
 Pale white chaplets and crowns of lat-
 ter seasons,

Fair false leaves (but the summer leaves
 were fals^{er}),
 Woven under the eyes of stars and
 planets
 When low light was upon the windy
 reaches
 Where the flower of foam was blown,
 a lily
 Dropt among the sonorous fruitless
 furrows
 And green fields of the sea that make
 no pasture:
 Since the winter begins, the weeping
 winter,
 All whose flowers are tears, and round
 his temples
 Iron blossom of frost is bound forever."

SAPPHICS.

ALL the night sleep came not upon my
 eyelids,
 Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed
 a feather,
 Yet with lips shut close and with eyes
 of iron
 Stood and beheld me.

Then to me so lying awake a vision
 Came without sleep over the seas and
 touched me,
 Softly touched mine eyelids and lips;
 and I too,
 Full of the vision,

Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,
 Saw the hair unbound and the feet
 unsandalled
 Shine as fire of sunset on western
 waters;
 Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the doves
 that drew her,
 Looking always, looking with necks
 reverted,
 Back to Lesbos, back to the hills where
 under
 Shone Mitylene;

Heard the flying feet of the Loves behind her
 Make a sudden thunder upon the waters,
 As the thunder flung from the strong unclosing
 Wings of a great wind.

So the goddess fled from her place, with awful
 Sound of feet and thunder of wings around her;
 While behind a clamor of singing women
 Severed the twilight.

Ah the singing, ah the delight, the passion!
 All the Loves wept, listening; sick with anguish,
 Stood the crowned nine Muses about Apollo;
 Fear was upon them,

While the tenth sang wonderful things they knew not.
 Ah the tenth, the Lesbian! the nine were silent,
 None endured the sound of her song for weeping;
 Laurel by laurel,

Faded all their crowns; but about her forehead,
 Round her woven tresses and ashen temples
 White as dead snow, paler than grass in summer,
 Ravaged with kisses,

Shone a light of fate as a crown forever.
 Yea, almost the implacable Aphrodite
 Paused, and almost wept; such a song was that song,
 Yea, by her name too

Called her, saying, "Turn to me, O my Sappho!"
 Yet she turned her face from the Love's, she saw not
 Tears for laughter darken immortal eyelids,
 Heard not about her

Fearful fitful wings of the doves departing,
 Saw not how the bosom of Aphrodite
 Shook with weeping, saw not her shaken raiment,
 Saw not her hands wrung;

Saw the Lesbians kissing across their smitten
 Lutes with lips more sweet than the sound of lute-strings,
 Mouth to mouth and hand upon hand her chosen,
 Fairer than all men;

Only saw the beautiful lips and fingers,
 Full of songs and kisses and little whispers,
 Full of music; only beheld among them
 Soar, as a bird soars

Newly fledged, her visible song, a marvel,
 Made of perfect sound and exceeding passion,
 Sweetly shapen, terrible, full of thunders,
 Clothed with the wind's wings.

Then rejoiced she, laughing with love, and scattered
 Roses, awful roses of holy blossom;
 Then the Loves thronged sadly with hidden faces
 Round Aphrodite,

Then the Muses, stricken at heart, were silent;
 Yea, the gods waxed pale; such a song was that song.
 All reluctant, all with a fresh repulsion,
 Flew from before her.

All withdrew long since, and the land was barren,
 Full of fruitless women and music only.
 Now perchance, when winds are assuaged at sunset,
 Lulled at the dewfall,

By the gray sea-side, unassuaged, unheeded,
 Unbeloved, unseen in the ebb of twilight,

Ghosts of outcast women return lamenting,

Purged not in Lethe,

Clothed about with flame and with tears, and singing

Songs that move the heart of the shaken heaven,

Songs that break the heart of the earth with pity,

Hearing, to hear them.

AT ELEUSIS.

MEN of Eleusis, ye that with long staves

Sit in the market-houses, and speak words

Made sweet with wisdom as the rare wine is

Thickened with honey; and ye sons of these

Who in the glad thick streets go up and down

For pasture or grave traffic or mere chance;

And all fair women having rings of gold On hands or hair; and chiefest over these

I name you, daughters of this man the king,

Who dipping deep smooth pitchers of pure brass

Under the bubbled wells, till each round lip

Stooped with loose gurgle of waters incoming,

Found me an old sick woman, lamed and lean,

Beside a growth of builded olive-boughs Whence multiplied thick song of thick-plumed throats—

Also wet tears filled up my hollow hands

By reason of my crying into them—

And pitied me; for as cold water ran

And washed the pitchers full from lip to lip,

So washed both eyes full the strong salt of tears.

And ye put water to my mouth, made sweet

With brown hill-berries: so in time I spoke,

And gathered my loose knees from under me.

Moreover, in the broad, fair halls this month

Have I found space and bountiful abode To please me. I Demeter speak of this,

Who am the mother and the mate of things:

For as ill men by drugs or singing words

Shut the doors inward of the narrow womb

Like a lock bolted with round iron through,

Thus I shut up the body and sweet mouth

Of all soft pasture and the tender land, So that no seed can enter in by it,

Though one sow thickly, nor some grain get out

Past the hard clods men cleave and bite with steel

To widen the sealed lips of them for use.

None of you is there in the peopled street

But knows how all the dry-drawn fur rows ache

With no green spot made count of in the black;

How the wind finds no comfortable grass,

Nor is assuaged with bud nor breath of herbs;

And in hot autumn, when ye house the stacks,

All fields are helpless in the sun, all trees

Stand as a man stripped out of all but skin.

Nevertheless, ye sick have help to get By means and stablished ordinance of God;

For God is wiser than a good man is.

But never shall new grass be sweet in earth

Till I get righted of my wound and wrong

By changing counsel of ill-minded Zeus

For of all other gods is none save me

<p>Clothed with like power to build and break the year. I make the lesser green begin, when spring Touches not earth but with one fearful foot ; And as a careful gilder with grave art Soberly colors and completes the face, Mouth, chin, and all, of some sweet work in stone, I carve the shapes of grass and tender corn, And color the ripe edges and long spikes With the red increase and the grace of gold. No tradesman in soft wools is cunninger To kill the secret of the fat white fleece With stains of blue and purple wrought in it. Three moons were made, and three moons burnt away, While I held journey hither out of Crete, Comfortless, tended by grave Hecate, Whom my wound stung with double iron point ; For all my face was like a cloth wrung out With close and weeping wrinkles, and both lids Sodden with salt continuance of tears. For Hades and the sidelong will of Zeus, And that lame wisdom that has writhen feet, Cunning, begotten in the bed of Shame, These three took evil will at me, and made Such counsel, that when time got wing to fly This Hades out of summer and low fields Forced the bright body of Persephone : Out of pure grass, where she lying down, red flowers Made their sharp little shadows on her sides, Pale heat, pale color on pale maiden flesh, — And chill water slid over her reddening feet,</p>	<p>Killing the throbs in their soft blood ; and birds, Perched next her elbow, and pecking at her hair, Stretched their necks more to see her than even to sing. A sharp thing is it I have need to say ; For Hades holding both white wrists of hers Unloosed the girdle, and with knot by knot Bound her between his wheels upon the seat, Bound her pure body, holiest yet and dear To me and God as always, clothed about With blossoms loosened, as her knees went down, Let fall as she let go of this and this By tens and twenties tumbled to her feet, White waifs or purple of the pasturage. Therefore with only going up and down My feet were wasted, and the gracious air, To me discomfortable and dun, became As weak smoke blowing in the under- world. And finding in the process of ill days What part had Zeus herein, and how as mate He coped with Hades, yokefellow in sin, I set my lips against the meat of gods, And drank not, neither ate or slept, in heaven. Nor in the golden greeting of their mouths Did ear take note of me, nor eye at all Track my feet going in the ways of them. Like a great fire on some strait slip of land Between two washing inlets of wet sea That burns the grass up to each lip of beach, And strengthens, waxing in the growth of wind, So burnt my soul in me at heaven and earth, Each way a ruin and a hungry plague, Visible evil ; nor could any night</p>
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Put cool between mine eyelids, nor the sun
 With competence of gold fill out my want.
 Yea, so my flame burnt up the grass and stones,
 Shone to the salt-white edges of thin sea,
 Distempered all the gracious work, and made
 Sick change, unseasonable increase of days
 And scant avail of seasons; for by this
 The fair gods faint in hollow heaven: there comes
 No taste of burnings of the twofold fat
 To leave their palates smooth, nor in their lips
 Soft rings of smoke, and weak scent wandering;
 All cattle waste and rot, and their ill smell
 Grows away from the lank, unsavory flesh
 That no man slays for offering; the sea
 And waters moved beneath the heath and corn
 Preserve the people of fin-twinkling fish,
 And river-flies feed thick upon the smooth;
 But all earth over is no man or bird
 (Except the sweet race of the kingfisher)
 That lacks not, and is wearied with much loss.
 Meantime, the purple inward of the house
 Was softened with all grace of scent and sound
 In ear and nostril perfecting my praise;
 Faint grape-flowers and cloven honey-cake
 And the just grain with dues of the shed salt
 Made me content: yet my hand loosened not
 Its gripe upon your harvest all year long.
 While I, thus woman-muffled in wan flesh
 And waste externals of a perished face,
 Preserved the levels of my wrath and love
 Patiently ruled; and with soft offices

Cooled the sharp noons, and busied the warm nights
 In care of this my choice, this child my choice,
 Triptolemus, the king's selected son:
 That this fair yearlong body, which hath grown
 Strong with strange milk upon the mortal lip
 And nerved with half a god, might so increase
 Outside the bulk and the bare scope of man;
 And waxen over large to hold within
 Base breath of yours, and this impoverished air,
 I might exalt him past the flame of stars,
 The limit and walled reach of the great world.
 Therefore my breast made common to his mouth
 Immortal savors, and the taste whereat
 Twice their hard life strains out the colored veins,
 And twice its brain confirms the narrow shell.
 Also at night, unwinding cloth from cloth
 As who unhusks an almond to the white,
 And pastures curiously the purer taste,
 I bared the gracious limbs and the soft feet,
 Unswaddled the weak hands, and in mid-ash
 Laid the sweet flesh of either feeble side,
 More tender for impressure of some touch
 Than wax to any pen; and lit around
 Fire, and made crawl the white, worm-shapen flame,
 And leap in little angers spark by spark
 At head at once, and feet; and the faint hair
 Hissed with rare sprinkles in the closer curl,
 And like scaled oarage of a keen thin fish
 In sea-water, so in pure fire his feet
 Struck out, and the flame bit not in his flesh,

But like a kiss it curled his lip, and
 heat
 Fluttered his eyelids; so each night I
 blew
 The hot ash red to purge him to full
 god.
 Ill is it when fear hungers in the soul
 For painful food, and chokes thereon,
 being fed;
 And ill slant eyes interpret the straight
 sun,
 But in their scope its white is wried to
 black:
 By the queen Metaneira mean I this;
 For with sick wrath upon her lips and
 heart,
 Narrowing with fear the spleenful pas-
 sages,
 She thought to thread this web's fine
 ravel out,
 Nor leave her shuttle split in combing
 it;
 Therefore she stole on us, and with
 hard sight
 Peered, and stooped close; then with
 pale, open mouth
 As the fire smote her in the eyes be-
 tween
 Cried, and the child's laugh sharply
 shortening
 As fire doth under rain, fell off; the
 flame
 Writhed once all through and died, and
 in thick dark
 Tears fell from mine on the child's
 weeping eyes,
 Eyes dispossessed of strong inheritance
 And mortal fallen anew. Who not the
 less
 From bud of beard to pale-gray flower
 of hair
 Shall wax vine-wise to a lordly vine,
 whose grapes
 Bleed the red, heavy blood of swoln
 soft wine,
 Subtle with sharp leaves' intricacy, until
 Full of white years and blossom of
 hoary days
 I take him perfected; for whose one
 sake
 I am thus gracious to the least who
 stands
 Filleted with white wool and girt upon

As he whose prayer endures upon the
 lip
 And falls not waste: wherefore let sac-
 rifice
 Burn and run red in all the wider ways,
 Seeing I have sworn by the pale tem-
 ples' band
 And popped hair of gold Persephone
 Sad-tressed and pleached low down
 about her brows,
 And by the sorrow in her lips, and death
 Her dumb and mournful-mouthed min-
 ister,
 My word for you is eased of its harsh
 weight
 And doubled with soft promise; and
 your king
 Triptolemus, this Celeus dead and
 swathed
 Purple and pale for golden burial,
 Shall be your helper in my services,
 Dividing earth and reaping fruits there-
 of
 In fields where wait, well-girt, well-
 wreathen, all
 The heavy-handed seasons all year
 through;
 Saving the choice of warm spear-headed
 grain,
 And stooping sharp to the slant-sided
 share
 All beasts that furrow the remeasured
 land
 With their bowed necks of burden
 equable.

AUGUST.

THERE were four apples on the bough,
 Half gold, half red, that one might know
 The blood was ripe inside the core;
 The color of the leaves was more
 Like stems of yellow corn that grow
 Through all the gold June meadow's
 floor.

The warm smell of the fruit was good
 To feed on, and the split green wood,
 With all its bearded lips and stains
 Of mosses in the cloven veins,
 Most pleasant, if one lay or stood
 In sunshine or in happy rains.

There were four apples on the tree,
Red stained through gold, that all might
see

The sun went warm from core to rind;
The green leaves made the summer
blind

In that soft place they kept for me
With golden apples shut behind.

The leaves caught gold across the sun,
And where the bluest air begun,
Thirsted for song to help the heat;
As I to feel my lady's feet
Draw close before the day were done:
Both lips grew dry with dreams of it.

In the mute August afternoon
They trembled to some undertone
Of music in the silver air:
Great pleasure was it to be there
Till green turned duskier, and the moon
Colored the corn-sheaves like gold hair.

That August time it was delight
To watch the red moons wane to white
'Twixt gray seamed stems of apple-
trees:

A sense of heavy harmonies
Grew on the growth of patient night,
More sweet than shapen music is.

But some three hours before the moon
The air, still eager from the noon,
Flagged after heat, not wholly dead;
Against the stem I leant my head;
The color soothed me like a tune,
Green leaves all round the gold and red.

I lay there till the warm smell grew
More sharp, when flecks of yellow dew
Between the round ripe leaves had
blurred

The rind with stain and wet · I heard
A wind that blew and breathed and blew,
Too weak to alter its one word.

The wet leaves next the gentle fruit
Felt smoother, and the brown tree-root
Felt the mould warmer: I, too, felt
(As water feels the slow gold melt
Right through it when the day burns
mute)

The peace of time wherein love dwelt.

There were four apples on the tree,
Gold stained on red, that all might see
The sweet blood filled them to the core:
The color of her hair is more
Like stems of fair faint gold, that be
Mown from the harvest's middle-floor.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.¹

THREE damsels in the queen's chamber,
The queen's mouth was most fair:
She spake a word of God's mother
As the combs went in her hair.
Mary that is of might,
Bring us to thy Son's sight.

They held the gold combs out from her,
A span's length off her head:
She sang this song of God's mother
And of her bearing-bed.
Mary most full of grace,
Bring us to thy Son's face.

When she sat at Joseph's hand,
She looked against her side;
And either way from the short silk band
Her girdle was all wried.
Mary that all good may,
Bring us to thy Son's way.

Mary had three women for her bed:
The twain were maidens clean;
The first of them had white and red,
The third had riven green.
Mary that is so sweet,
Bring us to thy Son's feet.

She had three women for her hair:
Two were gloved soft and shod;
The third had feet and fingers bare,
She was the likest God.
Mary that wieldeth land,
Bring us to thy Son's hand.

She had three women for her ease:
The twain were good women;
The first two were the two *Maries*,
The third was *Magdalen*.
Mary that perfect is,
Bring us to thy Son's kiss.

¹ Suggested by a drawing of Mr. D. G. Rossetti's

Joseph had three workmen in his stall,
To serve him well upon :
The first of them were Peter and Paul,
The third of them was John.
Mary, God's handmaiden,
Bring us to thy Son's ken.

"If your child be none other man's,
But if it be very mine,
The bedstead shall be gold two spans,
The bedfoot silver fine."
Mary that made God mirth,
Bring us to thy Son's birth.

"If the child be some other man's,
And if it be none of mine,
The manger shall be straw two spans,
Betwixen kine and kine."
Mary that made sin cease,
Bring us to thy Son's peace.

Christ was born upon this wise :
It fell on such a night,
Neither with sounds of psalteries,
Nor with fire for light.
Mary that is God's spouse,
Bring us to thy Son's house.

The star came out upon the east
With a great sound and sweet :
Kings gave gold to make him feast,
And myrrh for him to eat.
Mary, of thy sweet mood,
Bring us to thy Son's good.

He had two handmaids at his head,
One handmaid at his feet :
The twain of them were fair and red,
The third one was right sweet.
Mary that is most wise,
Bring us to thy Son's eyes. Amen.

THE MASQUE OF QUEEN BER- SABE.

A MIRACLE-PLAY.

King David. Knights mine, all that
be in hall,
I have a council to you all,
Because of this thing God lets fall
Among us for a sign.

For some days hence as I did eat
From kingly dishes my good meat,
There flew a bird between my feet
As red as any wine.
This bird had a long bill of red,
And a gold ring above his head ;
Long time he sat and nothing said,
Put softly down his neck, and fed
From the gilt patens fine :
And as I marvelled at the last,
He shut his two keen eyen fast,
And suddenly woxe big and brast
Ere one should tell to nine.

Primus Miles. Sir, note this that I
will say :
That Lord who maketh corn with hay,
And morrows each of yesterday,
He hath you in his hand.

Secundus Miles (Paganus quidam).
By Satan I hold no such thing ;
For if wine swell within a king
Whose ears for drink are hot and ring,
The same shall dream of wine-bibbing
Whilst he can lie or stand.

Queen Bersabe. Peace now, lords, for
Godis head.

Ye chirk as starlings that be fed,
And gape as fishes newly dead :
The devil put your bones to bed,
Lo, this is all to say.

Secundus Miles. By Mahound, lords,
I have good will
This devil's bird to wring and spill ;
For now meseems our game goes ill,
Ye have scant hearts to play.

Tertius Miles. Lo, sirs, this word is
there said,
That Urias the knight is dead
Through some ill craft : by Poulis head,
I doubt his blood hath made so red
This bird that flew from the queen's bed
Whereof ye have such fear.

King David. Yea, my good knave,
and is it said
That I can raise men from the dead ?
By God I think to have his head
Who saith words of my lady's bed
For any thief to hear.
Et percutiat eum in capite.

Queen Bersabe. I wis men shall spit
at me,
And say it were but right for thee
That one should hang thee on a tree :
Ho ! it were a fair thing to see
The big stones bruise her false body ;
Fie ! who shall see her dead ?

King David. I rede you have no fear
of this,
For as ye wot, the first good kiss
I had must be the last of his ;
Now are ye queen of mine, I wis,
And lady of a house that is
Full rich of meat and bread.

Primus Miles. I bid you make good
cheer to be
So fair a queen as all men see.
And hold us for your lieges free :
By Peter's soul that hath the key,
Ye have good hap of it.

Secundus Miles. I would that he were
hanged and dead
Who hath no joy to see your head
With gold about it, barred on red :
I hold him as a sow of lead
That is so scant of wit.

Tunc dicat NATHAN propheta. O
king ! I have a word to thee :
The child that is in Bersabe
Shall wither without light to see ;
This word is come of God by me
For sin that ye have done.
Because herein ye did not right,
To take the fair one lamb to smite
That was of Urias the knight :
Ye wist he had but one.
Full many sheep I wot ye had,
And many women, when ye bade
To do your will and keep you glad ;
And a good crown about your head
With gold to show thereon.
This Urias had one poor house,
With low-barred latoun shot-windows,
And scant of corn to fill a mouse ;
And rusty basnets for his brows,
To wear them to the bone.
Yea, the roofs also, as men sain,
Were thin to hold against the rain :
Therefore what rushes were there lain

Grew wet withouten foot of men ;
The stancheons were all gone in twain
As sick man's flesh is gone.
Nathless he had great joy to see
The long hair of this Bersabe
Fall round her lap and round her knee
Even to her small soft feet, that be
Shod now with crimson royally,
And covered with clean gold.
Likewise great joy he had to kiss
Her throat, where now the scarlet is
Against her little chin, I wis,
That then was but cold.
No scarlet then her kirtle had,
And little gold about it sprad ;
But her red mouth was always glad
To kiss, albeit the eyes were sad
With love they had to hold.

Secundus Miles. How ! old thief, thy
wits are lame ;
To clip such it is no shame ;
I rede you in the devil's name,
Ye come not here to make men game :
By Termagaunt that maketh grame,
I shall to-bete thine head.
Hic Diabolus capiat eum.
This knave hath sharp fingers, perfay ;
Mahound you thank and keep alway,
And give you good knees to pray ;
What man hath no lust to play,
The devil wring his ears, I say :
There is no more but wellaway,
For now am I dead.

King David. Certes his mouth is
wried and black,
Full little pence be in his sack :
This devil hath him by the back,
It is no boot to lie.

Nathan. Sitteth now still, and learn
of me
A little while, and ye shall see
The face of God's strength presently.
All queens made as this Bersabe,
All that were fair and foul ye be,
Come hither ; it am I.
Et hic omnes cantabunt.

Herodias. I am the queen Herodias.
This headband of my temples was
King Herod's gold band woven me ;

This broken dry staff in my hand
Was the queen's staff of a great land
Betwixen Perse and Samarie.
For that one dancing of my feet,
The fire is come in my green wheat,
From one sea to the other sea.

Aholibah. I am the queen Aholibah.
My lips kissed dumb the word of *Ah*
Sighed on strange lips grown sick
thereby.

God wrought to me my royal bed :
The inner work thereof was red,
The outer work was ivory.
My mouth's heat was the heat of flame
For lust towards the kings that came
With horsemen riding royally.

Cleopatra. I am the queen of Ethiope.
Love bade my kissing eyelids ope,
That men beholding might praise love;
My hair was wonderful and curled;
My lips held fast the mouth o' the world
To spoil the strength and speech
thereof.

The latter triumph in my breath
Bowed down the beaten brows of death,
Ashamed they had not wrath enough.

Abihail. I am the queen of Tyrians.
My hair was glorious for twelve spans,
That dried to loose dust afterward.
My stature was a strong man's length :
My neck was like a place of strength
Built with white walls, even and hard.
Like the first noise of rain leaves catch
One from another, snatch by snatch,
Is my praise, hissed against and
marred.

Asubah. I am the queen of Amorites.
My face was like a place of lights
With multitudes at festival.
The glory of my gracious brows
Was like God's house made glorious
With colors upon either wall.
Between my brows and hair there was
A white space like a space of glass
With golden candles over all.

Aholah. I am the queen of Amalek.
There was no tender touch or fleck
To spoil my body or bared feet.

My words were soft like dulcimers,
And the first sweet of grape-flowers
Made each side of my bosom sweet.
My raiment was as tender fruit
Whose rind smells sweet of spice-tree
root,
Bruised balm-blossom and budded
wheat.

Ahinoam. I am the queen Ahinoam.
Like the throat of a soft slain lamb
Was my throat, softer veined than
his :

My lips were as two grapes the sun
Lays his whole weight of heat upon
Like a mouth heavy with a kiss :
My hair's pure purple a wrought fleece,
My temples therein as a piece
Of a pomegranate's cleaving is.

Atarah. I am the queen Sidonian.
My face made faint the face of man,
And strength was bound between my
brows.

Spikenard was hidden in my ships,
Honey and wheat and myrrh in strips,
White wools that shine as color does,
Soft linen dyed upon the fold,
Split spice and cores of scented gold,
Cedar and broken calamus.

Semiramis. I am the queen Semira-
mis.
The whole world, and the sea that is
In fashion like a chrysopras,
The noise of all men laboring,
The priest's mouth tired through thanks-
giving,
The sound of love in the blood's
pause,

The strength of love in the blood's beat,
All these were cast beneath my feet,
And all found lesser than I was.

Hesione. I am the queen Hesione.
The seasons that increased in me
Made my face fairer than all men's.
I had the summer in my hair ;
And all the pale gold autumn air
Was as the habit of my sense.
My body was as fire that shone :
God's beauty that makes all things one
Was one among my handmaidens.

Chrysothemis. I am the queen of
Samothrace.
God, making roses, made my face
As a rose filled up full with red.
My brows made sharp the straitened
seas
From Pontus to that Chersonese
Whereon the ebb'd Asian stream is
shed.
My hair was as sweet scent that drips :
Love's breath begun about my lips
Kindled the lips of people dead.

Thomyris. I am the queen of Scy-
thians.
My strength was like no strength of
man's,
My face like day, my breast like
spring.
My fame was felt in the extreme land
That hath sunshine on the one hand,
And on the other star-shining.
Yea, and the wind there fails of breath ;
Yea, and there life is waste like death ;
Yea, and there death is a glad thing.

Harhas. I am the queen of Anakim.
In the spent years whose speech is dim,
Whose raiment is the dust and death,
My stately body without stain
Shone as the shining race of rain
Whose hair a great wind scattereth.
Now hath God turned my lips to sighs,
Plucked off mine eyelids from mine eyes,
And sealed with seals my way of breath.

Myrrha. I am the queen Arabian.
The tears wherewith mine eyelids ran
Smelt like my perfumed eyelids' smell.
A harsh thirst made my soft mouth hard,
That ached with kisses afterward ;
My brain rang like a beaten bell.
As tears on eyes, as fire on wood,
Sin fed upon my breath and blood,
Sin made my breasts subside and
swell.

✓ *Pasiphae.* I am the queen Pasiphae.
Not all the pure clean-colored sea
Could cleanse or cool my yearning
veins ;
Nor any root nor herb that grew,
Flag-leaves that let green water through,

Nor washing of the dews and rains.
From shame's pressed core I wrung the
sweet
Fruit's savor that was death to eat,
Whereof no seed but death remains.

Sappho. I am the queen of Lesbians.
My love, that had no part in man's,
Was sweeter than all shape of sweet.
The intolerable infinite desire
Made my face pale like faded fire
When the ash'en pyre falls through
with heat.
My blood was hot wan wine of love,
And my song's sound the sound thereof,
The sound of the delight of it.

Messalina. I am the queen of Italy.
These were the signs God set on me :
A barren beauty subtle and sleek,
Curled carven hair, and cheeks worn
wan
With fierce false lips of many a man,
Large temples where the blood ran
weak,
A mouth athirst and amorous,
And hungering as the grave's mouth
does,
That, being an hungered, cannot
speak.

✓ *Amestris.* I am the queen of Persians.
My breasts were lordlier than bright
swans,
My body as amber fair and thin.
Strange flesh was given my lips for
bread,
With poisonous hours my days were
fed,
And my feet shod with adder skin.
In Shushan toward Ecbatane
I wrought my joys with tears and pain,
My loves with blood and bitter sin.

Ephrath. I am the queen of Rephaim.
God, that some while refraineth him,
Made in the end a spoil of me.
My rumor was upon the world
As strong sound of swoln water hurled
Through porches of the straining sea.
My hair was like the flag-flower,
And my breasts carven goodlier
Than beryl with chalcedony.

Pasithea. I am the queen of Cypriotes.
Mine oarsmen, laboring with brown
throats,

Sang of me many a tender thing.
My maidens, girdled loose, and braced
With gold from bosom to white waist,
Praised me between their wool-comb-
ing.

All that praise Venus all night long
With lips like speech and lids like song
Praised me till song lost heart to sing.

Alaciel. I am the queen Alaciel.
My mouth was like that moist gold cell
Whereout the thickest honey drips.
Mine eyes were as a gray-green sea :
The amorous blood that smote on me
Smote to my feet and finger-tips.
My throat was whiter than the dove,
Mine eyelids as the seals of love,
And as the doors of love my lips.

Erigone. I am the queen Erigone.
The wild wine shed as blood on me
Made my face brighter than a bride's.
My large lips had the old thirst of earth,
Mine arms the might of the old sea's
girth
Bound round the whole world's iron
sides.

Within mine eyes and in mine ears
Were music and the wine of tears,
And light, and thunder of the tides.

Et hic extant, et dicat BERSABE regina.

Alas! God, for thy great pity
And for the might that is in thee,
Behold, I woful Bersabe
Cry out with stoopings of my knee,
And thy wrath laid and bound on me
Till I may see thy love.
Behold, Lord, this child is grown
Within me between bone and bone
To make me mother of a son,
Made of my body with strong moan :
There shall not be another one
That shall be made hereof.

King David. Lord God, alas! what
shall I sain?

Lo, thou art as an hundred men
Both to break and build again :
The wild ways thou makest plain,

Thine hands hold the hail and rain,
And thy fingers both grape and grain ;
Of their largess we be all well fain,

And of their great pity :
The sun thou madest of good gold,
Of clean silver the moon cold,
All the great stars thou hast told
As thy cattle in thy fold
Every one by his name of old ;
Wind and water thou hast in hold,
Both the land and the long sea ;
Both the green sea and the land,
Lord God, thou hast in hand,
Both white water and gray sand ;
Upon thy right or thy left hand
There is no man that may stand :
Lord, thou rue on me.
O wise Lord, if thou be keen
To note things amiss that been,
I am not worth a shell of bean
More than an old mare meagre and
lean.

For all my wrong-doing with my queen,
It grew not of our hearts clean.
But it began of her body.
For it fell in the hot May,
I stood within a paven way
Built of fair bright stone, per fay,
That is as fire of night and day,
And lighteth all my house.
Therein be neither stones nor sticks,
Neither red nor white bricks,
But for cubits five or six
There is most goodly sardonyx,
And amber laid in rows.

It goes round about my roofs,
(If ye list ye shall have proofs)
There is good space for horse and hoofs,
Plain and nothing perilous.
For the fair green weather's heat,
And for the smell of leavés sweet,
It is no marvel, well ye weet,
A man to waxen amorous.
This I say now by my case
That spied forth of that royal place :
There I saw in no great space
Mine own sweet, both body and face,
Under the fresh boughs.

In a water that was there
She wesshe her goodly body bare,
And dried it with her owen hair :
Both her arms and her knees fair,
Both bosom and brows :

Both shoulders and eke thighs,
 Tho she wesshe upon this wise ;
 Ever she sighed with little sighs,
 And ever she gave God thank.
 Yea, God wot I can well see yet
 Both her breast and her sides all wet,
 And her long hair withouten let
 Spread sideways like a drawing net ;
 Full dear bought and full far fet
 Was that sweet thing there y-set ;
 It were a hard thing to forget
 How both lips and eyen met,
 Breast and breath sank.

So goodly a sight as there she was,
 Lying looking on her glass
 By wan water in green grass,
 Yet saw never man.

So soft and great she was and bright
 With all her body waxen white,
 I woxe nigh blind to see the light
 Shed out of it to left and right :
 This bitter sin from that sweet sight
 Between us twain began.

Nathan. Now, sir, be merry anon,
 For ye shall have a full wise son,
 Goodly and great of flesh and bone :
 There shall no king be such an one,
 I swear by Godis rood.

Therefore, lord, be merry here,
 And go to meat withouten fear,
 And hear a mass with goodly cheer ;
 For to all folk ye shall be dear,
 And all folk of your blood.

Et tunc dicant Laudamus.

ST. DOROTHY.

It hath been seen, and yet it shall be
 seen,
 That out of tender mouths God's praise
 hath been
 Made perfect, and with wood and simple
 string
 He hath played music sweet as shawm-
 playing
 To please himself with softness of all
 sound ;
 And no small thing but hath been some-
 time found
 Full sweet of use, and no such humble-
 ness

But God hath bruised withal the sen-
 tences

And evidence of wise men witness-
 ing ;

No leaf that is so soft a hidden thing
 It never shall get sight of the great sun ;
 The strength of ten has been the
 strength of one,

And lowliness has waxed imperious.

There was in Rome a man Theophi-
 lus,

Of right great blood and gracious ways,
 that had

All noble fashions to make people glad
 And a soft life of pleasurable days.

He was a goodly man for one to praise,
 Flawless and whole upward from foot
 to head ;

His arms were a red hawk that alway
 fed

On a small bird with feathers gnawed
 upon,

Beaten and plucked about the bosom-
 bone

Whereby a small round fleck like fire
 there was :

They called it in their tongue lampa-
 dias :

This was the banner of the lordly man.
 In many straits of sea and reaches wan
 Full of quick wind, and many a shaken
 firth,

It had seen fighting days of either earth,
 Westward or east of waters Gaditane
 (This was the place of sea-rocks under
 Spain

Called after the great praise of Her-
 cules),

And north beyond the washing Pontic
 seas,

Far windy Russian places fabulous,
 And salt fierce tides of storm-swoln
 Bosphorus.

Now, as this lord came straying in
 Rome town,

He saw little lattice open down,
 And after it a press of maidens' heads
 That sat upon their cold small quiet
 beds

Talking, and played upon short-stringed
 lutes ;

And other some ground perfume out of
 roots

Gathered by marvellous moons in Asia,
Saffron and aloes and wild cassia,
Colored all through and smelling of
the sun;

And over all these was a certain one
Clothed softly, with sweet herbs about
her hair,

And bosom flowerful; her face more
fair

Than sudden-singing April in soft
lands;

Eyed like a gracious bird, and in both
hands

She held a psalter painted green and
red.

This Theophile laughed at the heart,
and said, —

“Now God so help me hither and St
Paul,

As by the new time of their festival
I have good will to take this maid to
wife.”

And herewith fell to fancies of her life,
And soft half-thoughts that ended sud-
denly.

This is man's guise to please himself,
when he

Shall not see one thing of his pleasant
things,

Nor with outwatch of many travailings
Come to be eased of the least pain he
hath

For all his love and all his foolish wrath,
And all the heavy manner of his mind.
Thus is he like a fisher fallen blind,
That casts his nets across the boat awry
To strike the sea, but lo! he striketh
dry,

And plucks them back all broken for
his pain,

And bites his beard, and casts across
again,

And reaching wrong slips over in the
sea.

So hath this man a strangled neck for
fee,

For all his cost he chuckles in his
throat.

This Theophile that little hereof wote
Laid wait to hear of her what she might
be:

Men told him she had name of Doro-
thy,

And was a lady of a worthy house.
Thereat this knight grew inly glorious.
That he should have a love so fair of
place.

She was a maiden of most quiet face,
Tender of speech, and had no hardi-
hood,

But was nigh feeble of her fearful
blood;

Her mercy in her was so marvellous
From her least years, that seeing her
schoolfellows

That read beside her stricken with a
rod,

She would cry sore, and say some word
to God

That he would ease her fellow of his
pain.

There is no touch of sun or fallen rain
That ever fell on a more gracious
thing.

In middle Rome there was in stone-
working

The church of Venus painted royally.
The chapels of it were some two or
three,

In each of them her tabernacle was,
And a wide window of six feet in glass

Colored with all her works in red and
gold.

The altars had bright cloths and cups
to hold

The wine of Venus for the services,
Made out of honey and crushed wood-
berries

That sved sweet yellow through the
thick wet red,

That on high days was borne upon the
head

Of Venus' priest, for any man to drink;
So that in drinking he should fall to
think

On some fair face, and in the thought
thereof

Worship, and such should triumph in
his love.

For this soft wine that did such grace
and good

Was new trans-shaped and mixed with
love's own blood,

That in the fighting Trojan time was
bled;

For which came such a woe to Diomed

That he was stifled after in hard sea.
 And some said that this wine-shedding
 should be
 Made of the falling of Adonis' blood,
 That curled upon the thorns and
 broken wood,
 And round the gold silk shoes on
 Venus' feet:
 The taste thereof was as hot honey
 sweet,
 And in the mouth ran soft and riotous.
 This was the holiness of Venus' house
 It was their worship, that in August
 days
 Twelve maidens should go through
 those Roman ways
 Naked, and having gold across their
 brows,
 And their hair twisted in short golden
 rows,
 To minister to Venus in this wise;
 And twelve men chosen in their compan-
 ies
 To match these maidens by the altar-
 stair,
 All in one habit, crowned upon the
 hair.
 Among these men was chosen The-
 ophile.
 This knight went out, and prayed a
 little while,
 Holding Queen Venus by her hands
 and knees:
 I will give thee twelve royal images
 Cut in glad gold, with marvels of
 wrought stone,
 For thy sweet priests to lean and pray
 upon,
 Jasper and hyacinth and chrysopras,
 And the strange Asian thalamite that
 was
 Hidden twelve ages under heavy sea
 Among the little sleepy pearls, to be
 A shrine lit over with soft candle-flame
 Burning all night red as hot brows of
 shame,
 So thou wilt be my lady without sin.
 Goddess that art all gold outside and
 in,
 Help me to serve thee in thy holy
 way.
 Thou knowest, Love, that in my bearing
 day

There shone a laughter in the singing
 stars
 Round the gold-cordèd bride-bed wherein
 Mars
 Touched thee and had thee in your
 kissing wise.
 Now, therefore, sweet, kiss thou my
 maiden's eyes
 That they may open graciously towards
 me;
 And this new fashion of thy shrine
 shall be
 As soft with gold as thine own happy
 head.
 The goddess, that was painted with
 face red
 Between two long green tumbled sides
 of sea,
 Stooped her neck sideways, and spake
 pleasantly:
 Thou shalt have grace as thou art
 thrall of mine.
 And with this came a savor of shed
 wine,
 And plucked-out petals from a rose's
 head:
 And softly with slow laughs of lip she
 said,—
 Thou shalt have favor all thy days of
 me.
 Then came Theophilus to Dorothy,
 Saying: O sweet, if one should strive or
 speak
 Against God's ways, he gets a beaten
 cheek
 For all his wage and shame above all
 men.
 Therefore I have no will to turn again
 When God saith "go," lest a worse
 thing fall out.
 Then she, misdoubting lest he went
 about
 To catch her wits, made answer some-
 what thus:
 I have no will, my lord Theophilus,
 To speak against this worthy word of
 yours;
 Knowing how God's will in all speech
 endures,
 That save by grace there may no thing
 be said.
 Then Theophile waxed light from foot
 to head,

And softly fell upon this answering :
It is well seen you are a chosen thing
To do God service in his gracious way.
I will that you make haste and holiday
To go next year upon the Venus stair,
Covered none else, but crowned upon
your hair,

And do the service that a maiden doth.
She said : But I that am Christ's maid
were loath

To do this thing that hath such bitter
name.

Thereat his brows were beaten with
sore shame,

And he came off, and said no other
word.

Then his eyes chanced upon his banner-
bird,

And he fell fingering at the staff of it,
And laughed for wrath, and stared
between his feet,

And out of a chafed heart he spake as
thus :

Lo how she japes at me Theophilus,
Feigning herself a fool, and hard to
love ;

Yet in good time for all she boasteth of
She shall be like a little beaten bird.

And while his mouth was open in that
word,

He came upon the house Janiculum,
Where some went busily, and other
some

Talked in the gate called the gate
glorious.

The emperor, which was one Gabalus,
Sat over all and drank chill wine alone.

To whom is come Theophilus anon,
And said as thus : *Beau sire, Dieu vous
aide.*

And afterward sat under him, and said
All this thing through as ye have wholly
heard.

This Gabalus laughed thickly in his
beard.

Yea, this is righteousness and maiden
rule.

Truly, he said, a maid is but a fool.
And japed at them as one full villanous,

In a fewd wise, this heathen Gabalus,
And sent his men to bind her as he
bade.

Thus have they taken Dorothy the maid,

And haled her forth as men hale pick-
purses :

A little need God knows they had of
this,

To hale her by her maiden gentle hair.
Thus went she lowly, making a soft

prayer,
As one who stays the sweet wine in his
mouth,

Murmuring with eased lips, and is
most loath

To have done wholly with the sweet of
it :

Christ king, fair Christ, that knowest
all men's wit

And all the feeble fashion of my ways,
O perfect God, that from all yester-
days

Abidest whole with morrows perfected,
I pray thee by thy mother's holy head,

Thou help me to do right, that I not
slip :

I have no speech nor strength upon my
lip,

Except thou help me, who art wise and
sweet.

Do this, too, for those nails that clove
thy feet,

Let me die maiden after many pains.

Though I be least among thy hand-
maidens,

Doubtless I shall take death more
sweetly thus.

Now have they brought her to King
Gabalus,

Who laughed in all his throat some
breathing-whiles.

By God, he said, if one should leap two
miles,

He were not pained about the sides so
much.

This were a soft thing for a man to
touch.

Shall one so chafe that hath such little
bones ?

And shook his throat with thick and
chuckedl moans

For laughter that she had such holi-
ness.

What aileth thee, wilt thou do services ?
It were good fare to fare as Venus doth.

Then said this lady with her maiden
mouth,

Shamefaced, and something paler in the
cheek :

Now, sir, albeit my wit and will to
speak

Give me no grace in sight of worthy men,
For all my shame yet know I this again,
I may not speak, nor after down-lying
Rise up to take delight in lute-playing,
Nor sing nor sleep, nor sit and fold my
hands,

But my soul in some measure under-
stands

God's grace laid like a garment over
me.

For this fair God that out of strong,
sharp sea

Lifted the shapely and green-colored
land,

And hath the weight of heaven in his
hand

As one might hold a bird, and under
him

The heavy golden planets beam by
beam

Building the feasting-chambers of his
house,

And the large world he holdeth with
his brows,

And with the light of them astonisheth
All place and time and face of life and
death,

And motion of the north wind and the
south,

And is the sound within his angel's
mouth

Of singing words and words of thanks-
giving,

And is the color of the latter spring
And heat upon the summer and the
sun,

And is beginning of all things begun,
And gathers in him all things to their
end,

And with the fingers of his hand doth
bend

The stretched-out sides of heaven like
a sail,

And with his breath he maketh the red
pale,

And fills with blood faint faces of men
dead,

And with the sound between his lips
are fed

Iron and fire and the white body of
snow,

And blossom of all trees in places low,
And small bright herbs about the little
hills,

And fruit pricked softly with birds'
tender bills,

And flight of foam about green fields
of sea,

And fourfold strength of the great
winds that be

Moved always outward from beneath
his feet,

And growth of grass and growth of
sheaved wheat

And all green flower of goodly-growing
lands;

And all these things he gathers with
his hands,

And covers all their beauty with his
wings:

The same, even God that governs all
these things,

Hath set my feet to be upon his ways.
Now, therefore, for no painfulness of
days

I shall put off this service bound on
me.

Also, fair sir, ye know this certainly,
How God was in his flesh full chaste
and meek,

And gave his face to shame, and either
cheek

Gave up to smiting of men tyrannous.
And here with a great voice this
Gabalus

Cried out and said: By God's blood
and his bones,

This were good game betwixen night
and nones

For one to sit and hearken to such
saws:

I were as lief fall in some big beast's
jaws

As hear these women's jaw-teeth chat-
tering;

By God a woman is the harder thing,
One may not put a hook into her
mouth.

Now by St. Luke I am so sore adrouth
For all these saws, I must needs drink
again;

But I pray God deliver all us men

From all such noise of women and their
heat.

That is a noble scripture, well I weet,
That likens women to an empty can;
When God said that, he was a full wise
man.

I trow no man may blame him as for
that.

And herewithal he drank a draught,
and spat,

And said: Now shall I make an end
hereof.

Come near, all men, and hearken for
God's love,

And ye shall hear a jest or twain, God
wot.

And spake as thus with mouth full
thick and hot:

But thou do this, thou shalt be shortly
slain.

Lo, sir, she said, this death and all this
pain

I take in penance of my bitter sins.

Yea, now, quoth Gabalus, this game
begins.

Lo, without sin one shall not live a span.

Lo, this is she that would not look on
man

Between her fingers folded in thwart
wise.

See how her shame hath smitten in her
eyes

That was so clean, she had not heard of
shame.

Certes, he said, by Gabalus my name,
This two years back I was not so well
pleased.

This were good mirth for sick men to
be eased,

And rise up whole and laugh at hearing
of.

I pray thee, show us something of thy
love,

Since thou wast maid thy gown is
waxen wide.

Yea, maid I am, she said, and some-
what sighed,

As one who thought upon the low fair
house

Where she sat working, with soft
bended brows

Watching her threads, among the
school-maidens.

And she thought well, now God had
brought her thence,

She should not come to sew her gold
again.

Then cried King Galabus upon his
men

To have her forth, and draw her with
steel gins.

And as a man hag-ridden beats and
grins,

And bends his body sidelong in his bed,
So wagged he with his body and knave's

head,
Gaping at her, and blowing with his

breath.

And in good time he gat an evil death
Out of his lewdness with his cursèd

wives:
His bones were hewn asunder as with

knives
For his misliving, certes it is said.

But all the evil wrought upon this maid,
It were full hard for one to handle it.

For her soft blood was shed upon her
feet,

And all her body's color bruised and
faint.

But she, as one abiding God's great
saint,

Spake not nor wept for all this travail
hard.

Wherefore the king commanded after
ward

To slay her presently in all men's sight.
And it was now an hour upon the night,

And winter-time, and a few stars be-
gan.

The weather was yet feeble and all wan
For beating of a weighty wind and

snow.
And she came walking in soft wise and

slow,
And many men with faces piteous.

Then came this heavy cursing Gabalus,
That swore full hard into his drunken

beard;
And faintly after without any word

Came Theophile some paces off the
king.

And in the middle of this wayfaring
Full tenderly beholding her he said:

There is no word of comfort with
men dead,

Nor any face and color of things sweet ;
 But always with lean cheeks and lifted
 feet
 These dead men lie all aching to the
 blood
 With bitter cold, their brows withouten
 hood
 Beating for chill, their bodies swathed
 full thin :
 Alas ! what hire shall any have herein
 To give his life and get such bitterness ?
 Also the soul going forth bodiless
 Is hurt with naked cold, and no man
 saith
 If there be house or covering for death
 To hide the soul that is discomforted.
 Then she beholding him a little said :
 Alas ! fair lord, ye have no wit of this ;
 For on one side death is full poor of
 bliss,
 And, as ye say, full sharp of bone and
 lean ;
 But on the other side is good and green,
 And hath soft flower of tender-colored
 hair
 Grown on his head, and a red mouth as
 fair
 As may be kissed with lips ; thereto his
 face
 Is as God's face, and in a perfect place
 Full of all sun and color of straight
 boughs,
 And waterheads about a painted house
 That hath a mile of flowers either way
 Outward from it, and blossom-grass of
 May
 Thickening on many a side for length
 of heat,
 Hath God set death upon a noble seat
 Covered with green and flowered in the
 fold,
 In likeness of a great king grown full
 old
 And gentle with new temperance of
 blood ;
 ✓ And on his brows a purpled purple hood,
 They may not carry any golden thing ;
 And plays some tune with subtle finger-
 ing
 On a small cithern, full of tears and
 sleep,
 And heavy pleasure that is quick to
 weep,
 And sorrow with the honey in her
 mouth ;
 And for this might of music that he
 doth,
 Are all souls drawn toward him with
 great love,
 And weep for sweetness of the noise
 thereof,
 And bow to him with worship of their
 knees ;
 And all the field is thick with companies
 Of fair-clothed men that play on shawms
 and lutes,
 And gather honey of the yellow fruits
 Between the branches waxen soft and
 wide ;
 And all this peace endures in either
 side
 Of the green land, and God beholdeth
 all.
 And this is girdled with a round fair
 wall
 Made of red stone, and cool with heavy
 leaves
 Grown out against it, and green blossom
 cleaves
 To the green chinks, and lesser wall-
 weed sweet,
 Kissing the crannies that are split with
 heat,
 And branches where the summer draws
 to head.
 And Theophile burnt in the cheek,
 and said :
 Yea, could one see it, this were marvel-
 lous.
 I pray you, at your coming to this house,
 Give me some leaf of all those tree-
 branches ;
 Seeing how sharp and white our
 weather is,
 There is no green nor gracious red to
 see.
 Yea, sir, she said, that shall I cer-
 tainly.
 And from her long sweet throat without
 a fleck
 Undid the gold, and through her
 stretched-out neck
 The cold axe clove, and smote away
 her head :
 Out of her throat the tender blood full
 red

Fell suddenly through all her long soft
 hair.
 And with good speed for hardness of
 the air
 Each man departed to his house again.
 Lo! as fair color in the face of
 men
 At seed-time of their blood, or in such
 wise
 As a thing seen increaseth in men's
 eyes,
 Caught first far off by sickly fits of
 sight, —
 So a word said, if one shall hear aright,
 Abides against the season of its growth.
 This Theophile went slowly, as one
 doth
 That is not sure for sickness of his
 feet;
 And, counting the white stonework of
 the street,
 Tears fell out of his eyes for wrath and
 love,
 Making him weep more for the shame
 thereof
 Than for true pain: so went he half a
 mile.
 And women mocked him, saying:
 Theophile,
 Lo, she is dead; what shall a woman
 have
 That loveth such an one? so Christ me
 save,
 I were as lief to love a man new-hung.
 Surely this man has bitten on his
 tongue,
 This makes him sad and writhled in
 his face.
 And when they came upon the paven
 place
 That was called sometime the place
 amorous,
 There came a child before Theophilus,
 Bearing a basket, and said suddenly:
 Fair sir, this is my mistress Dorothy
 That sends you gifts; and with this he
 was gone.
 In all this earth there is not such an
 one
 For color and straight stature made so
 fair.
 The tender growing gold of his pure
 hair

Was as wheat growing, and his mouth
 as flame.
 God called him Holy after his own
 name.
 With gold cloth like fire burning he
 was clad.
 But for the fair green basket that he
 had,
 It was filled up with heavy white and
 red;
 Great roses stained still where the first
 rose bled,
 Burning at heart for shame their heart
 withholds;
 And the sad color of strong mari-
 golds
 That have the sun to kiss their lips for
 love;
 The flower that Venus' hair is woven of,
 The color of fair apples in the sun,
 Late peaches gathered when the heat
 was done,
 And the slain air got breath; and after
 these
 The fair faint-headed poppies drunk
 with ease;
 And heaviness of hollow lilies red.
 Then cried they all that saw these
 things, and said
 It was God's doing, and was marvel-
 lous.
 And in brief while this knight The-
 ophilus
 Is waxen full of faith, and witnesseth
 Before the king, of God and love and
 death,
 For which the king bade hang him
 presently.
 A gallows of a goodly piece of tree
 This Gabalus hath made to hang him
 on.
 Forth of this world lo Theophile is
 gone
 With a wried neck — God give us better
 fare
 Than his that hath a twisted throat to
 wear!
 But truly for his love God hath him
 brought
 There where his heavy body grieves
 him nought,
 Nor all the people plucking at his feet;
 But in his face his lady's face is sweet,

And through his lips her kissing lips
are gone.
God send him peace, and joy of such
an one!
This is the story of St. Dorothy.
I will you of your mercy pray for me
Because I wrote these sayings for your
grace,
That I may one day see her in the face.

THE TWO DREAMS.

(FROM BOCCACCIO.)

I WILL that if I say a heavy thing
Your tongues forgive me; seeing ye
know that spring
Has flecks and fits of pain to keep her
sweet,
And walks somehow with winter-bitten
feet.
Moreover it sounds often well to let
One string, when ye play music, keep
at fret
The whole song through; one petal
that is dead
Confirms the roses, be they white or red;
Dead sorrow is not sorrowful to bear
As the thick noise that breaks mid
weeping were;
The sick sound aching in a lifted throat
Turns to sharp silver of a perfect note;
And though the rain falls often, and
with rain
Late autumn falls on the old red leaves
like pain,
I deem that God is not disquieted.
Also while men are fed with wine and
bread,
They shall be fed with sorrow at his
hand.
There grew a rose-garden in Florence
land
More fair than many; all red summers
through
The leaves smelt sweet and sharp of
rain, and blew
Sideways with tender wind; and there-
in fell
Sweet sound wherewith the green waxed
audible,

As a bird's will to sing disturbed his
throat,
And set the sharp wings forward like a
boat
Pushed through soft water, moving his
brown side
Smooth-shapen as a maid's, and shook
with pride
His deep warm bosom, till the heavy
sun's
Set face of heat stopped all the songs
at once.
The ways were clean to walk, and deli-
cate;
And when the windy white of March
grew late,
Before the trees took heart to face the
sun
With ravelled raiment of lean winter
on,
The roots were thick and hot with hol-
low grass.
Some roods away a lordly house
there was,
Cool with broad courts and latticed
passage wet
From rush-flowers and lilies ripe to
set,
Sown close among the strewings of the
floor;
And either wall of the slow corridor
Was dim with deep device of gracious
things;
Some angel's steady mouth and weight
of wings
Shut to the side; or Peter with straight
stole
And beard cut black against the aureole
That spanned his head from nape to
crown; there
Mary's gold hair, thick to the girdle-
tie
Wherein was bound a child with tender
feet;
Or the broad cross with blood nigh
brown on it.
Within this house a righteous lord
abode,
Ser Averardo; patient of his mood,
And just of judgment; and to child he
had
A maid so sweet that her mere sight
made glad

Men sorrowing, and unbound the brows
of hate;
And where she came, the lips that pain
made strait
Waxed warm and wide, and from un-
tender grew
Tender as those that sleep brings pa-
tience to.
Such long locks had she, that with knee
to chin
She might have wrapped and warmed
her feet therein.
Right seldom fell her face on weeping
wise;
Gold hair she had, and golden-colored
eyes,
Filled with clear light and fire and large
repose
Like a fair hound's; no man there is
but knows
Her face was white, and thereto she
was tall;
In no wise lacked there any praise at
all
To her most perfect and pure maiden-
hood;
No sin I think there was in all her
blood.
She, where a gold grate shut the roses
in,
Dwelt daily through deep summer
weeks, through green
Flushed hours of rain upon the leaves;
and there
Love made him room and space to
worship her
With tender worship of bowed knees,
and wrought
Such pleasure as the pained sense pal-
ates not
For weariness, but at one taste undoes
The heart of its strong sweet, is raven-
ous
Of all the hidden honey; words and
sense
Fail through the tune's imperious
prevalence.
In a poor house this lover kept apart,
Long communing with patience next
his heart
If love of his might move that face at
all,
Tuned evenwise with colors musical;

Then after length of days he said thus:
"Love,
For love's own sake and for the love
thereof,
Let no harsh words untune your gra-
cious mood;
For good it were, if any thing be
good,
To comfort me in this pain's plague of
mine;
Seeing thus, how neither sleep nor
bread nor wine
Seems pleasant to me, yea no thing
that is
Seems pleasant to me; only I know
this,
Love's ways are sharp for palms of
piteous feet
To travel, but the end of such is sweet:
Now do with me as seemeth you the
best."
She mused a little, as one holds his
guest
By the hand musing, with her face
borne down:
Then said, "Yea, though such bitter
seed be sown,
Have no more care of all that you have
said;
Since if there is no sleep will bind your
head,
Lo, I am fain to help you certainly:
Christ knoweth, sir, if I would have
you die;
There is no pleasure when a man is
dead."
Thereat he kissed her hands and yellow
head,
And clipped her fair long body many
times:
I have no wit to shape in written rhymes
A scant tithe of this great joy they
had.
They were too near love's secret to
be glad,
As whoso deems the core will surely
melt
From the warm fruit his lips caress,
hath felt
Some bitter kernel where the teeth shut
hard;
Or as sweet music sharpens after-
ward,

<p>Being half disrelished both for sharp and sweet ; As sea-water, having killed over-heat In a man's body, chills it with faint ache ; So their sense, burdened only for love's sake, Failed for pure love ; yet so time served their wit, They saved each day some gold reserves of it, Being wiser in love's riddle than such be Whom fragments feed with his chance charity. All things felt sweet were felt sweet overmuch ; The rose-thorn's prickle dangerous to touch, And flecks of fire in the thin leaf- shadows ; Too keen the breathèd honey of the rose. Its red too harsh a weight on feasted eyes ; They were so far gone in love's histo- ries, Beyond all shape and color and mere breath, Where pleasure has for kinsfolk sleep and death, And strength of soul and body waxen blind For weariness, and flesh entailed with mind, When the keen edge of sense foretast- eth sin. Even this green place the summer caught them in Seemed half deflowered and sick with beaten leaves In their strayed eyes ; these gold flower- fumèd eyes Burnt out to make the sun's love-offer- ing, The midnight's prayer, the rose's thank- giving, The trees' weight burdening the strengthless air, The shape of her stilled eyes, her colored hair, Her body's balance from the moving feet, —</p>	<p>All this, found fair, lacked yet one grain of sweet It had some warm weeks back : so perisheth On May's new lip the tender April breath : So those same walks the wind sowed lilies in All April through, and all their latter kin Of languid leaves whereon the autumn blows, — The dead red raiment of the last year's rose, — The last year's laurel, and the last year's love, Fade, and grow things that death grows weary of. What man will gather in red summer- time The fruit of some obscure and hoary rhyme Heard last midwinter, taste the heart in it, Mould the smooth semitones afresh, refit The fair limbs ruined, flush the dead blood through With color, make all broken beauties new For love's new lesson — shall not such find pain When the marred music laboring in his brain Frets him with sweet sharp fragments, and lets slip One word that might leave satisfied his lip, — One touch that might put fire in all the chords ? This was her pain : to miss from all sweet words Some taste of sound, diverse and deli- cate, — Some speech the old love found out to compensate For seasons of shut lips and drowsi- ness ; Some grace, some word the old love found out to bless Passionless months and undelighted weeks. The flowers had lost their summer scented cheeks,</p>
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Their lips were ~~no more sweet than~~
~~dally breath~~ :
 The year was plagued with instances of
 death.
 So fell it, these were sitting in cool
 grass
 With leaves about, and many a bird
 there was
 Where the green shadow thickest im-
 pleached
 Soft fruit and writen spray and blos-
 som bleached
 Dry in the sun or washed with rains to
 white :
 Her girdle was pure silk, the bosom
 bright
 With purple as purple water and gold
 wrought in.
 One branch had touched with dusk her
 lips and chin,
 Made violet of the throat, abashed with
 shade
 The breast's bright plaited work : but
 nothing frayed
 The sun's large kiss on the luxurious
 hair.
 Her beauty was new color to the
 air,
 And music to the silent many birds.
 Love was an-hungered for some perfect
 words
 To praise her with; but only her low
 name
 "Andrevuola" came thrice, and thrice
 put shame
 In her clear cheek, so fruitful with new
 red
 That for pure love straightway shame's
 self was dead.
 Then with lids gathered as who late
 had wept,
 She began saying, "I have so little
 slept,
 My lids drowse now against the very
 sun ;
 Yea, the brain aching with a dream
 begun
 Beats like a fitful blood ; kiss but both
 brows,
 And you shall pluck my thoughts grown
 dangerous
 Almost away." He said thus, kissing
 them :

"O sole sweet thing that God is glad
 to name,
 My one gold gift, if dreams be sharp
 and sore
 Shall not the waking time increase
 much more
 With taste and sound, sweet eyesight
 or sweet scent ?
 Has any heat too hard and insolent
 Burnt bare the tender married leaves, ✓
 undone
 The maiden grass shut under from the
 sun ?
 Where in this world is room enough
 for pain ?"
 The feverish finger of love had
 touched again
 Her lips with happier blood ; the pain
 lay meek
 In her fair face, nor altered lip nor
 cheek
 With pallor or with pulse ; but in her
 mouth
 Love thirsted as a man wayfaring doth,
 Making it humble as weak hunger is.
 She lay close to him, bade do this and
 this,
 Say that, sing thus : then almost weep-
 ing-ripe
 Crouched, then laughed low. As one
 that fain would wipe
 The old record out of old things done
 and dead,
 She rose, she heaved her hands up, and
 waxed red
 For wilful heart and blameless fear of
 blame ;
 Saying, "Though my wits be weak, this
 is no shame ✓
 For a poor maid whom love so punish-
 eth
 With heats of hesitation and stopped
 breath
 That with my dreams I live yet heavily
 For pure sad heart and faith's humility.
 Now be not wroth, and I will show you
 this.
 "Methought our lips upon their
 second kiss
 Met in this place, and a fair day we
 had,
 And fair soft leaves that waxed and
 were not sad

<p>With shaken rain, or bitten through with drouth; When I, beholding ever how your mouth Waited for mine, the throat being fallen back, Saw crawl thereout a live thing flaked with black Specks of brute slime and leper-colored scale, A devil's hide with foul flame-writhen grail Fashioned where hell's heat festers loathsomest; And that brief speech may ease me of the rest, Thus were you slain and eaten of the thing. My waked eyes felt the new day shud- dering On their low lids, felt the whole east so beat, I'ant with close pulse of such a plague- struck heat, As if the palpitating dawn drew breath For horror, breathing between life and death, Till the sun sprang blood-bright and violent." So finishing, her soft strength wholly spent, She gazed each way, lest some brute- hooved thing, The timeless travail of hell's child-bear- ing, Should threat upon the sudden: where- at he, For relish of her tasted misery And tender little thornprick of her pain, Laughed with mere love. What lover among men But hath his sense fed sovereignly 'twixt whiles With tears and covered eyelids and sick smiles And soft disaster of a painèd face? What pain established in so sweet a place, But the plucked leaf of it smells fra- grantly? What color burning man's wide-open eye</p>	<p>But may be pleasurable seen? what sense Keeps in its hot sharp extreme vio- lence No savor of sweet things? The be- reaved blood And emptied flesh in their most broken mood Fail not so wholly, famish not when thus Past honey keeps the starved lip covet- ous. Therefore this speech from a glad mouth began, Breathed in her tender hair and temples wan Like one prolonged kiss while the lips had breath: "Sleep, that abides in vassalage of death And in death's service wears out half his age, Hath his dreams full of deadly vassal- age, Shadow and sound of things ungra- cious; Fair shallow faces, hooded bloodless brows, And mouths past kissing; yea, myself have had As harsh a dream as holds your eyelids sad. "This dream I tell you came three nights ago: In full mid sleep I took a whim to know How sweet things might be; so I turned and thought; But save my dream all sweet availed me not. First came a smell of pounded spice and scent Such as God ripens in some continent Of utmost amber in the Syrian sea; And breaths as though some costly rose could be Spoiled slowly, wasted by some bitter fire To burn the sweet out leaf by leaf, and tire The flower's poor heart with heat and waste, to make Strong magic for some perfumed wo- man's sake.</p>
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<p>Then a cool naked sense beneath my feet Of bud and blossom; and sound of veins that beat As if a lute should play of its own heart And fearfully, not smitten of either part; And all my blood it filled with sharp and sweet As gold swoln grain fills out the huskèd wheat; So I rose naked from the bed, and stood Counting the mobile measure in my blood Some pleasant while, and and through each limb there came Swift little pleasures pungent as a flame, Felt in the thrilling flesh and veins as much As the outer curls that feel the comb's first touch Thrill to the roots and shiver as from fire; And blind between my dream and my desire I seemed to stand, and held my spirit still Lest this should cease. A child whose fingers spill Honey from cells forgotten of the bee Is less afraid to stir the hive and see Some wasp's bright back inside, than I to feel Some finger-touch disturb the flesh like steel. I prayed thus: Let me catch a secret here So sweet, it sharpens the sweet taste of fear, And takes the mouth with edge of wine; I would Have here some color and smooth shape as good As those in heaven whom the chief garden hides With low grape-blossom veiling their white sides, And lesser tendrils that so bind and blind Their eyes and feet, that if one come behind</p>	<p>To touch their hair they see not, neither fly; This would I see in heaven, and not die. So praying, I had nigh cried out and knelt, So wholly my prayer filled me: till I felt In the dumb night's warm weight of glowing gloom Somewhat that altered all my sleeping- room, And made it like a green low place wherein Maids mix to bathe: one sets her small warm chin Against a ripple, that the angry pearl May flow like flame about her: the next curl Dips in some eddy colored of the sun To wash the dust well out: another one Holds a straight ankle in her hand and swings With lavish body sidelong, so that rings Of sweet fierce water, swollen and splen- did, fail All round her fine and floated body pale, Swayed flower-fashion, and her balanced side Swerved edgeways lets the weight of water slide, As taken in some underflow of sea Swerves the banked gold of sea-flowers; but she Pulls down some branch to keep her perfect head Clear of the river: even from wall to bed, I tell you, was my room transfigured so. Sweet, green and warm it was, nor could one know If there were walls or leaves, or if there was No bed's green curtain, but mere gentle grass. There were set also hard against the feet Gold plates with honey and green grapes to eat, With the cool water's noise to hear in rhymes: And a wind warmed me full of furze and limes</p>
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And all hot sweets the heavy summer
fills
 To the round brim of smooth cup-
shapen hills.
 Next the grave walking of a woman's
 feet
 Made my veins hesitate, and gracious
 heat
 Made thick the lids and leaden on mine
 eyes:
 And I thought ever, surely it were wise
 Not yet to see her: this may last (who
 knows?)
 Five minutes; the poor rose is twice a
 rose
 Because it turns a face to her, the wind
 Sings that way; hath this woman ever
 sinned,
 I wonder? as a boy with apple-rind,
 I played with pleasures, made them to
 my mind,
 Changed each ere tasting. When she
 came indeed,
 First her hair touched me, then I grew
 to feed
 On the sense of her hand; her mouth
 at last
 Touched me between the cheek and lip,
 and past
 Over my face with kisses here and
 there
 Sown in and out across the eyes and
 hair.
 Still I said nothing; till she set her
 face
 More close and harder on the kissing-
 place,
 And her mouth caught like a snake's
 mouth, and stung
 So faint and tenderly, the fang scarce
 clung
 More than a bird's foot: yet a wound
 it grew,
 A great one, let this red mark witness
 you
 Under the left breast; and the stroke
 thereof
 So clove my sense that I woke out of
 love,
 And knew not what this dream was, nor
 had wit;
 But now God knows if I have skill of
 it."

Hereat she laid one palm against her
 lips
 To stop their trembling; as when water
 slips
 Out of a beak-mouthed vessel with
 faint noise,
 And chuckles in the narrowed throat,
 and cloy
 The carven rims with murmuring, so
 came
 Words in her lips with no word right of
 them,
 A beaten speech thick and disconsolate,
 Till his smile ceasing waxed compas-
 sionate
 Of her sore fear that grew from any
 thing,—
 The sound of the strong summer thick-
 ening
 In heated leaves of the smooth apple-
 trees:
 The day's breath felt about the ash-
 branches,
 And noises of the noon whose weight
 still grew
 On the hot heavy-headed flowers, and
 drew
 Their red mouths open till the rose-
 heart ached;
 For eastward all the crowding rose was
 slaked
 And soothed with shade: but westward
 all its growth
 Seemed to breathe hard with heat as a
 man doth
 Who feels his temples newly feverous.
 And even with such motion in her
 brows
 As that man hath in whom sick days
 begin,
 She turned her throat and spake, her
 voice being thin
 As a sick man's, sudden and tremulous;
 "Sweet, if this end be come indeed on us,
 Let us love more;" and held his mouth
 with hers.
 As the first sound of flooded hill-waters
 Is heard by people of the meadow-grass,
 Or ever a wandering waif of ruin pass
 With whirling stones and foam of the
 brown stream
 Flaked with fierce yellow: so behold-
 ing him

She felt before tears came her eyelids
 wet,
 Saw the face deadly thin where life was
 yet,
 Heard his throat's harsh last moan
 before it clomb:
 And he, with close mouth passionate
 and dumb,
 Burned at her lips: so lay they without
 speech,
 Each grasping other, and the eyes of
 each
 Fed in the other's face: till suddenly
 He cried out with a little broken cry
 This word, "O help me, sweet, I am
 but dead!"
 And even so saying, the color of fair
 red
 Was gone out of his face, and his
 blood's beat
 Fell, and stark death made sharp his
 upward feet
 And pointed hands; and without moan
 he died.
 Pain smote her sudden in the brows
 and side,
 Strained her lips open, and made burn
 her eyes:
 For the pure sharpness of her miseries
 She had no heart's pain, but mere
 body's wrack.
 But at the last her beaten blood drew
 back
 Slowly upon her face, and her stunned
 brows
 Suddenly grown aware and piteous
 Gathered themselves, her eyes shone,
 her hard breath
 Came as though one nigh dead came
 back from death;
 Her lips throbb'd, and life trembled
 through her hair.
 And in brief while she thought to
 bury there
 The dead man, that her love might lie
 with him
 In a sweet bed under the rose-roots
 dim
 And soft earth round the branch'd
 apple-trees,
 Full of hushed heat and heavy with
 great ease,
 And no man entering divide him thence.

Wherefore she bade one of her hand-
 maidens
 To be her help to do upon this wise.
 And saying so the tears out of her
 eyes
 Fell without noise, and comforted her
 heart:
 Yea, her great pain eased of the sorest
 part
 Began to soften in her sense of it.
 There under all the little branches sweet
 The place was shapen of his burial:
 They shed thereon no thing funereal,
 But colored leaves of latter rose-blos-
 som,
 Stems of soft grass, some withered red
 and some
 Fair and flesh-blooded; and spoil splen-
 dider
 Of marigold and great spent sunflower.
 And afterwards she came back with-
 out word
 To her own house; two days went, and
 the third
 Went, and she showed her father of
 this thing.
 And for great grief of her soul's travail-
 ing
 He gave consent she should endure in
 peace
 Till her life's end; yea, till her time
 should cease,
 She should abide in fellowship of pain.
 And having lived a holy year or twain
 She died of pure waste heart and wear-
 ness.
 And for love's honor in her love's dis-
 tress
 This word was written over her tomb's
 head:
 "Here dead she lieth, for whose sake
 Love is dead."

AHOLIBAH.

In the beginning God made thee
 A woman well to look upon,
 Thy tender body as a tree
 Whereon cool wind hath always
 blown
 Till the clean branches be well
 grown.

- There was none like thee in the land;
The girls that were thy bondwomen
Did bind thee with a purple band
Upon thy forehead, that all men
Should know thee for God's hand-
maiden.
- Strange raiment clad thee like a bride,
With silk to wear on hands and
feet,
And plates of gold on either side:
Wine made thee glad, and thou
didst eat
Honey, and choice of pleasant
meat.
- And fishers in the middle sea
Did get thee sea-fish and sea-weeds
In color like the robes on thee;
And curious work of plated reeds,
And wools wherein live purple
bleeds.
- And round the edges of thy cup
Men wrought thee marvels out of
gold,
Strong snakes with lean throats lifted
up,
Large eyes whereon the brows had
hold,
And scaly things their slime kept
cold.
- For thee they blew soft winds in flutes,
And ground sweet roots for cunning
scent;
Made slow because of many lutes,
The wind among thy chambers
went
Wherein no light was violent.
- God called thy name Aholibah,
His tabernacle being in thee,
A nation through waste Asia;
Thou wert a tent sewn cunningly
With gold and colors of the sea.
- God gave thee gracious ministers
And all their work who plait and
weave:
The cunning of embroiderers
That sew the pillow to the sleeve,
And likeness of all things that live.
- Thy garments upon thee were fair
With scarlet and with yellow
thread;
Also the weaving of thine hair
Was as fine gold upon thy head,
And thy silk shoes were sewn with
red.
- All sweet things he bade sift, and
ground
As a man grindeth wheat in mills
With strong wheels alway going round;
He gave thee corn, and grass that
fills
The cattle on a thousand hills.
- The wine of many seasons fed
Thy mouth, and made it fair and
clean;
Sweet oil was poured out on thy head,
And ran down like cool rain be-
tween
The strait close locks it melted in.
- The strong men and the captains knew
Thy chambers wrought and fash-
ioned
With gold and covering of blue,
And the blue raiment of thine head
Who sat on a stately bed.
- All these had on their garments wrought
The shape of beasts and creeping
things.
The body that availeth not,
Flat backs of worms and veined
wings,
And the lewd bulk that sleeps and
stings.
- Also the chosen of the years,
The multitude being at ease,
With sackbuts and with dulcimers
And noise of shawms and psalteries,
Made mirth within the ears of these.
- But as a common woman doth,
Thou didst think evil and devise;
The sweet smell of thy breast and
mouth,
Thou madest as the harlot's wise,
And there was painting on thine
eyes.

Yea, in the woven guest-chamber
 And by the painted passages
 Where the strange, gracious paintings
 were,
 State upon state of companies,
 There came on thee the lust of
 these.

Because of shapes on either wall
 Sea-colored from some rare blue
 shell

At many a Tyrian interval,
 Horsemen on horses, girdled well,
 Delicate and desirable, —

Thou saigest : I am sick of love :
 Stay with me flagons, comfort me
 With apples, for my pain thereof,
 Till my hands gather in his tree
 That fruit wherein my lips would
 be.

Yea, saigest thou, I will go up
 When there is no more shade than
 one

May cover with a hollow cup,
 And make my bed against the sun
 Till my blood's violence be done.

Thy mouth was leant upon the wall
 Against the painted mouth, thy chin
 Touched the hair's painted curve and
 fall ;
 Thy deep throat, fallen lax and
 thin,
 Worked as the blood's beat worked
 therein.

Therefore, O thou Aholibah,
 God is not glad because of thee ;
 And thy fine gold shall pass away
 Like those fair coins of ore that be
 Washed over by the middle sea.

Then will one make thy body bare
 To strip it of all gracious things,
 And pluck the cover from thine hair,
 And break the gift of many kings,
 Thy wrist-rings and thine ankle-
 rings.

Likewise the man whose body joins
 To thy smooth body, as was said,
 Who hath a girdle on his loins,
 And dyed attire upon his head, —
 The same who, seeing, worshipped,

Because thy face was like the face
 Of a clean maiden that smells
 sweet,

Because thy gait was as the pace
 Of one that opens not her feet,
 And is not heard within the street :

Even he, O thou Aholibah,
 Made separate from thy desire,
 Shall cut thy nose and ears away,
 And bruise thee for thy body's hire,
 And burn the residue with fire.

Then shall the heathen people say,
 The multitude being at ease ;
 Lo, this is that Aholibah
 Whose name was blown among
 strange seas,
 Grown old with soft adulteries.

Also her bed was made of green,
 Her windows beautiful for glass,
 That she had made her bed between :
 Yea, for pure lust her body was
 Made like white summer-colored
 grass.

Her raiment was a strong man's spoil ;
 Upon a table by a bed
 She set mine incense and mine oil
 To be the beauty of her head,
 In chambers walled about with red.

Also between the walls she had
 Fair faces of strong men portrayed ;
 All girded round the loins, and clad
 With several cloths of woven braid
 And garments marvellously made.

Therefore the wrath of God shall be
 Set as a watch upon her way ;
 And whoso findeth by the sea
 Blown dust of bones will hardly say
 If this were that Aholibah.

We were ten maidens by a well-head,
 Small white birds in the mill-water :
 Sweeter maidens never were wed,
 Rings of red for the king's daughter.

The first to spin, the second to sing,
 Seeds of wheat in the mill-water ;
 The third may was a goodly thing,
 White bread and brown for the king's daughter.

The fourth to sew, and the fifth to play,
 Fair green weed in the mill-water ;
 The sixth may was a goodly may,
 White wine and red for the king's daughter.

The seventh to woo, the eighth to wed,
 Fair thin reeds in the mill-water ;
 The ninth had gold work on her head,
 Honey in the comb for the king's daughter.

The ninth had gold work round her hair,
 Fallen flowers in the mill-water ;
 The tenth may was goodly and fair,
 Golden gloves for the king's daughter.

We were ten maidens in a field green,
 Fallen fruit in the mill-water :
 Fairer maidens never have been,
 Golden sleeves for the king's daughter.

By there comes the king's young son,
 A little wind in the mill-water ;
 " Out of ten maidens ye'll grant me one,"
 A crown of red for the king's daughter.

" O of ten mayes ye'll give me the best,"
 A little rain in the mill-water ;
 A comb of yellow straw for all the rest,
 A comb of gold for the king's daughter.

He ta'en out the goodliest,
 Rain that rains in the mill-water ;
 A comb of yellow shell for all the rest,
 A comb of gold for the king's daughter.

He's made her bed to the goodliest,
 Wind and hail in the mill-water ;
 A grass girdle for all the rest,
 A girdle of arms for the king's daughter.

He's set his heart to the goodliest,
 Snow that snows in the mill-water ;
 Nine little kisses for all the rest,
 An hundredfold for the king's daughter.

He's ta'en his leave at the goodliest,
 Broken boats in the mill-water ;
 Golden gifts for all the rest,
 Sorrow of heart for the king's daughter.

" Ye'll make a grave for my fair body,"
 Running rain in the mill-water ;
 " And ye'll streak my brother at the side of me,"
 The pains of hell for the king's daughter.

MAY JANET.

(BRETON.)

" STAND up, stand up, thou May Janet,
 And go to the wars with me."
 He's drawn her by both hands,
 With her face against the sea.

" He that strews red shall gather white,
 He that sows white reap red,
 Before your face and my daughter's
 Meet in a marriage-bed.

" Gold coin shall grow in the yellow field,
 Green corn in the green sea-water,
 And red fruit grow of the rose's red,
 Ere your fruit grow in her."

" But I shall have her by land," he said,
 " Or I shall have her by sea,
 Or I shall have her by strong treason
 And no grace go with me."

MADONNA MIA.

UNDER green apple-boughs
That never a storm will rouse,
My lady hath her house
Between two bowers;
In either of the twain,
Red roses full of rain;
She hath for bondwomen
All kind of flowers.

She hath no handmaid fair
To draw her curled gold hair
Through rings of gold that bear
Her whole hair's weight;
She hath no maids to stand
Gold-clothed on either hand:
In all the great green land
None is so great.

She hath no more to wear
But one white hood of vair
Drawn over eyes and hair,
Wrought with strange gold,
Made for some great queen's head,
Some fair great queen since dead;
And one strait gown of red
Against the cold.

Beneath her eyelids deep
Love lying seems asleep,
Love, swift to wake, to weep,
To laugh, to gaze;
Her breasts are like white birds,
And all her gracious words
As water-grass to herds
In the June-days.

To her all dews that fall
And rains are musical;
Her flowers are fed from all,
Her joy from these;
In the deep-feathered firs
Their gift of joy is hers,
In the least breath that stirs
Across the trees.

She grows with greenest leaves,
Ripens with reddest sheaves,
Forgets, remembers, grieves,
And is not sad;

The quiet lands and skies
Leave light upon her eyes:
None knows her, weak or wise,
Or tired or glad.

None knows, none understands,
What flowers are like her hands;
Though you should search all lands
Wherein time grows,
What snows are like her feet,
Though his eyes burn with heat
Through gazing on my sweet,
Yet no man knows.

Only this thing is said:
That white and gold and red,
God's three chief words, man's bread
And oil and wine,
Were given her for dowers,
And kingdom of all hours,
And grace of goodly flowers
And various vine.

This is my lady's praise:
God after many days
Wrought her in unknown ways,
In sunset lands.
This was my lady's birth:
God gave her might and mirth,
And laid his whole sweet earth
Between her hands.

Under deep apple-boughs
My lady hath her house;
She wears upon her brows
The flower thereof;
All saying but what God saith
To her is as vain breath;
She is more strong than death,
Being strong as love.

THE KING'S DAUGHTER.

We were ten maidens in the green corn,
Small red leaves in the mill-water:
Fairer maidens never were born,
Apples of gold for the king's daughter.

We were ten maidens by a well-head,
 Small white birds in the mill-water :
 Sweeter maidens never were wed,
 Rings of red for the king's daughter.

The first to spin, the second to sing,
 Seeds of wheat in the mill-water ;
 The third may was a goodly thing,
 White bread and brown for the king's
 daughter.

The fourth to sew, and the fifth to play,
 Fair green weed in the mill-water ;
 The sixth may was a goodly may,
 White wine and red for the king's
 daughter.

The seventh to woo, the eighth to wed,
 Fair thin reeds in the mill-water ;
 The ninth had gold work on her head,
 Honey in the comb for the king's
 daughter.

The ninth had gold work round her
 hair,
 Fallen flowers in the mill-water ;
 The tenth may was goodly and fair,
 Golden gloves for the king's daugh-
 ter.

We were ten maidens in a field green,
 Fallen fruit in the mill-water :
 Fairer maidens never have been,
 Golden sleeves for the king's daugh-
 ter.

By there comes the king's young son,
 A little wind in the mill-water ;
 " Out of ten maidens ye'll grant me one,"
 A crown of red for the king's daugh-
 ter.

" Out of ten mays ye'll give me the
 best,"
 A little rain in the mill-water ;
 A bed of yellow straw for all the rest,
 A bed of gold for the king's daughter.

He's ta'en out the goodliest,
 Rain that rains in the mill-water ;
 A comb of yellow shell for all the rest,
 A comb of gold for the king's daugh-
 ter.

He's made her bed to the goodliest,
 Wind and hail in the mill-water ;
 A grass girdle for all the rest,
 A girdle of arms for the king's daugh-
 ter.

He's set his heart to the goodliest,
 Snow that snows in the mill-water ;
 Nine little kisses for all the rest,
 An hundredfold for the king's daugh-
 ter.

He's ta'en his leave at the goodliest,
 Broken boats in the mill-water ;
 Golden gifts for all the rest,
 Sorrow of heart for the king's daugh-
 ter.

" Ye'll make a grave for my fair body,"
 Running rain in the mill-water ;
 " And ye'll streek my brother at the side
 of me,"
 The pains of hell for the king's daugh-
 ter.

MAY JANET.

(BRETON.)

" STAND up, stand up, thou May Janet,
 And go to the wars with me."
 He's drawn her by both hands,
 With her face against the sea.

" He that strews red shall gather white,
 He that sows white reap red,
 Before your face and my daughter's
 Meet in a marriage-bed.

" Gold coin shall grow in the yellow
 field,
 Green corn in the green sea-water,
 And red fruit grow of the rose's red,
 Ere your fruit grow in her."

" But I shall have her by land," he said,
 " Or I shall have her by sea,
 Or I shall have her by strong treason
 And no grace go with me."

Her father's drawn her by both hands,
He's rent her gown from her,
He's ta'en the smock round her body,
Cast in the sea-water.

The captain's drawn her by both sides
Out of the fair green sea:
"Stand up, stand up, thou May Janet,
And come to the war with me."

The first town they came to,
There was a blue bride-chamber;
He clothed her on with silk,
And belted her with amber.

The second town they came to,
The bridesmen feasted knee to knee;
He clothed her on with silver,
A stately thing to see.

The third town they came to,
The bridesmaids all had gowns of gold;
He clothed her on with purple,
A rich thing to behold.

The fourth town they came to,
He clothed her white and red,
With a green flag either side of her
And a gold flag overhead.

THE BLOODY SON.

(FINNISH.)

"O WHERE have ye been the morn sae late,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
O where have ye been the morn sae late?
And I wot I hae but anither."
"By the water-gate, by the water-gate,
O dear mither."
"And whatten kin' o' wark had ye there to make,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And whatten kin' o' wark had ye there to make?
And I wot I hae but anither."
"I watered my steeds with water frae the lake,
O dear mither."

"Why is your coat sae fouled the day,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
Why is your coat sae fouled the day?
And I wot I hae but anither."

"The steeds wer stamping sair by the weary banks of clay,
O dear mither."

"And where gat ye thae sleeves of red,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And where gat ye thae sleeves of red?
And I wot I hae but anither."

"I have slain my ae brither by the weary water-head,
O dear mither."

"And where will ye gang to mak your mend,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And where will ye gang to mak your mend?
And I wot I hae not anither."

"The warldis way, to the warldis end,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your father dear,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your father dear?
And I wot I hae not anither."

"The wood to fell and the logs to bear,
For he'll ever see my body mair,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your mither dear,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your mither dear?
And I wot I hae not anither."

"The wool to card and the wool to wear,
For ye'll never see my body mair,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave for your wife to take,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave for your wife to take?
And I wot I hae not anither."

"A goodly gown and a fair new make,
For she'll do nae mair for my body's
sake,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your young
son fair,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your young son
fair?

And I wot ye hae not anither."

"A twiggen school-rod for his body to
bear,
Though it garred him greet he'll get
nae mair,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your little
daughter sweet,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your little daugh-
ter sweet?

And I wot ye hae not anither."

"Wild mulberries for her mouth to
eat,
She'll get nae mair though it garred her
greet,
O dear mither."

"And when will ye come back frae
roamin',
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And when will ye come back frae
roamin'?

And I wot I hae not anither."

"When the sunrise out of the north is
comen,
O dear mither."

"When shall the sunrise on the north
side be,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
When shall the sunrise on the north
side be?

And I wot I hae not anither."

"When chuckie-stanes shall swim in
the sea,
O dear mither."

"When shall stanes in the sea swim,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
When shall stanes in the sea swim?
And I wot I hae not anither."

"When birdies' feathers are as lead
therein,
O dear mither."

"When shall feathers be as lead,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
When shall feathers be as lead?
And I wot I hae not anither."

"When God shall judge between the
quick and dead,
O dear mither."

THE SEA-SWALLOWS

THIS fell when Christmas lights were
done,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine;
But before the Easter lights begun;
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne.

Two lovers sat where the rowan blows,
And all the grass is heavy and
fine,
By the gathering place of the sea-swal-
lows
When the wind brings them over
Tyne.

Blossom of broom will never make
bread,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine;
Between her brows she is grown red,
That was full white in the fields by
Tyne.

"O what is this thing ye have on,
Show me now, sweet daughter of
mine?"

"O father, this is my little son
That I found hid in the sides of
Tyne.

"O what will ye give my son to eat,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine?"

"Fen-water and adder's meat,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."

- "Or what will ye get my son to wear,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine?"
- "A weed and a web of nettle's hair,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."
- "Or what will ye take to line his bed,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine?"
- "Two black stones at the kirk-wall's
head,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."
- "Or what will ye give my son for land,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine?"
- "Three girl's paces of red sand,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."
- "Or what will ye give me for my son,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine?"
- "Six times to kiss his young mouth
on,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."
- "But what have ye done with the bear-
ing-bread,
And what have ye made of the wash-
ing-wine?
Or where have ye made your bearing-
bed,
To bear a son in the sides of Tyne?"
- "The bearing-bread is soft and new,
There is no soil in the straining wine;
The bed was made between green and
blue,
It stands full soft by the sides of
Tyne."
- "The fair grass was my bearing-bread,
The well-water my washing-wine;
The low leaves were my bearing-bed,
And that was best in the sides of
Tyne."
- "O daughter, if ye have done this thing,
I wot the greater grief is mine;
- This was a bitter child-bearing,
When ye were got by the sides of
Tyne.
- "About the time of sea-swallows
That fly full thick by six and nine,
Ye'll have my body out of the house,
To bury me by the sides of Tyne.
- "Set nine stones by the wall for twain,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine;
For the bed I take will measure ten,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne.
- "Tread twelve girl's paces out for
three,
Red rose leaves will never make
wine;
For the pit I made has taken me,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the
Tyne."

THE YEAR OF LOVE.

THERE were four loves that one by one,
Following the seasons and the sun,
Passed over without tears, and fell
Away without farewell.

The first was made of gold and tears,
The next of aspen-leaves and fears,
The third of rose-boughs and rose-roots,
The last love of strange fruits.

These were the four loves faded. Hold
Some minutes fast the time of gold
When our lips each way clung and
clove
To a face full of love.

The tears inside our eyelids met,
Wrung forth with kissing, and wept wet
The faces cleaving each to each
Where the blood served for speech.

The second, with low patient brows
Bound under aspen-colored boughs
And eyes made strong and grave with
sleep
And yet too weak to weep;

The third, with eager mouth at ease
Fed from late autumn honey, lees
Of scarce gold left in latter cells
With scattered flower-smells, —

Hair sprinkled over with spoilt sweet
Of ruined roses, wrists and feet
Slight-swathed, as grassy girdled
sheaves
Hold in stray poppy-leaves ;

The fourth, with lips whereon has bled
Some great pale fruit's slow color, shed
From the rank bitter husk whence drips
Faint blood between her lips, —

Made of the heat of whole great Junes
Burning the blue dark round their moons
(Each like a mown red marigold),
So hard the flame keeps hold, —

These are burnt thoroughly away.
Only the first holds out a day
Beyond these latter loves that were
Made of mere heat and air.

And now the time is wintery
The first love fades too : none will see,
When April warms the world anew,
The place wherein love grew.

THE LAST ORACLE.

(A. D. 361.)

εἶπατε τῷ βασιλεῖ, χαμαὶ πέσε δαιδαλὸς αὐλά·
οὐκέτι Φοῖβος ἔχει καλυβάν, οὐ μάρτιδα δάφνην,
οὐ παγὰν λαλέουσάν· ἀπίσβετο καὶ λάλον ὕδωρ.

YEARS have risen and fallen in dark-
ness or in twilight,
Ages waxed and waned that knew not
thee nor thine,
White the world sought light by night
and sought not thy light,
Since the sad last pilgrim left thy
dark mid shrine.

Dark the shrine, and dumb the fount of
song thence welling,
Save for words more sad than tears
of blood, that said :

*Tell the king, on earth has fallen the
glorious dwelling,*

*And the water-springs that spake are
quenched und dead.*

*Not a cell is left the god, no roof, no
cover :*

*In his hand the prophet laurel flowers
no more.*

And the great king's high sad heart,
thy true last lover,

Felt thine answer pierce and cleave it
to the core.

And he bowed down his hopeless
head

In the drift of the wild world's
tide,

And dying, *Thou hast conquered, he
said,*

Galilæan : he said it, and died.

And the world that was thine and
was ours

When the Graces took hands with
the Hours

Grew cold as a winter wave

In the wind from a wide-mouthed
grave,

As a gulf wide open to swallow

The light that the world held dear.

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
Destroyer and healer, hear !

Age on age thy mouth was mute, thy
face was hidden,

And the lips and eyes that loved thee
blind and dumb ;

Song forsook their tongues that held
thy name forbidden,

Light their eyes that saw the strange
god's kingdom come.

Fire for light and hell for heaven and
psalms for pæans

Filled the clearest eyes and lips most
sweet of song,

When for chant of Greeks the wail of
Galilæans

Made the whole world moan with
hymns of wrath and wrong.

Yea, not yet we see thee, father, as they
saw thee,

They that worshipped when the world
was theirs and thine,

They whose words had power by thine
own power to draw thee

Down from heaven till earth seemed
more than heaven divine.

For the shades are about us that hover
 When darkness is half withdrawn,
 And the skirts of the dead night cover
 The face of the live new dawn.
 For the past is not utterly past,
 Though the word on its lips be the last,
 And the time be gone by with its creed
 When men were as beasts that bleed,
 As sheep or as swine that wallow,
 In the shambles of faith and of fear.

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
 Destroyer and healer, hear!

Yet it may be, lord and father, could we know it,
 We that love thee for our darkness shall have light
 More than ever prophet hailed of old, or poet
 Standing crowned and robed and sovereign in thy sight.
 To the likeness of one God their dreams enthralled thee,
 Who wast greater than all gods that waned and grew;
 Son of God the shining son of Time they called thee,
 Who wast older, O our father, than they knew.

For no thought of man made gods to love or honor
 Ere the song within the silent soul began;
 Nor might earth in dream or deed take heaven upon her
 Till the word was clothed with speech by lips of man.
 And the word and the life wast thou,
 The spirit of man and the breath;
 And before thee the gods that bow
 Take life at thine hands and death.
 For these are as ghosts that wane,
 That are gone in an age or twain;
 Harsh, merciful, passionate, pure,
 They perish, but thou shalt endure;
 Be their life as the swan's or the swallow,
 They pass as the flight of a year.

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
 Destroyer and healer, hear!

Thou the word, the light, the life, the breath, the glory,
 Strong to help and heal, to lighten and to slay,
 Thine is all the song of man, the world's whole story;
 Not of morning and of evening is thy day.
 Old and younger gods are buried or begotten
 From uprising to downsetting of thy sun,
 Risen from eastward, fallen to westward and forgotten,
 And their springs are many, but their end is one.

Divers births of godheads find one death appointed,
 As the soul whence each was born makes room for each;
 God by god goes out, disrowned and disanointed,
 But the soul stands fast that gave them shape and speech.
 Is the sun yet cast out of heaven?
 Is the song yet cast out of man?
 Life that had song for its leaven
 To quicken the blood that ran
 Through the veins of the songless years
 More bitter and cold than tears;
 Heaven that had thee for its one
 Light, life, word, witness, O sun, —
 Are they soundless and sightless and hollow,
 Without eye, without speech, without ear?

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
 Destroyer and healer, hear!

Time arose, and smote thee silent at his warning;
 Change and darkness fell on men that fell from thee;
 Dark thou satest, veiled with light, behind the morning,
 Till the soul of man should lift up eyes and see.
 Till the blind mute soul get speech again and eyesight,

Man may worship not the light of life
 within;
 In his sight the stars whose fires grow
 dark in thy sight
 Shine as sunbeams on the night of
 death and sin.
 Time again is risen with mightier word
 of warning,
 Change hath blown again a blast of
 louder breath;
 Clothed with clouds and stars and
 dreams that melt in morning,
 Lo, the gods that ruled by grace of
 sin and death!
 They are conquered, they break, they
 are stricken,
 Whose might made the whole world
 pale;
 They are dust that shall rise not or
 quicken
 Though the world for their death's
 sake wail.
 As a hound on a wild beast's trace,
 So time has their godhead in chase;
 As wolves when the hunt makes
 head,
 They are scattered, they fly, they are
 fled;
 They are fled beyond hail, beyond
 hollo,
 And the cry of the chase, and the
 cheer.
 O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
 Destroyer and healer, hear!
 Day by day thy shadow shines in heaven
 beholden,
 Even the sun, the shining shadow of
 thy face:
 King, the ways of heaven before thy
 feet grow golden;
 God, the soul of earth is kindled
 with thy grace.
 In thy lips the speech of man whence
 gods were fashioned,
 In thy soul the thought that makes
 them and unmakes;
 By thy light and heat incarnate and im-
 passionate,
 Soul to soul of man gives light for
 light, and takes.
 As they knew thy name of old time
 could we know it,

Healer called of sickness, slayer in-
 voked of wrong,
 Light of eyes that saw thy light, god,
 king, priest, poet,
 Song should bring thee back to heal
 us with thy song.
 For thy kingdom is past not away,
 Nor thy power from the place there-
 of hurled:
 Out of heaven they shall cast not the
 day,
 They shall cast not out song from
 the world.
 By the song and the light they give,
 We know thy works that they live;
 With the gift thou hast given us of
 speech
 We praise, we adore, we beseech,
 We arise at thy bidding, and follow,
 We cry to thee, answer, appear,
 O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
 Destroyer and healer, hear!

IN THE BAY.

I.

BEYOND the hollow sunset, ere a star
 Take heart in heaven from eastward,
 while the west,
 Fulfilled of watery resonance and rest,
 Is as a port with clouds for harbor-
 bar
 To fold the fleet in of the winds from
 far
 That stir no plume now of the bland
 sea's breast;

II.

Above the soft sweep of the breathless
 bay
 South-westward, far past flight of night
 and day,
 Lower than the sunken sunset sinks,
 and higher
 Than dawn can freak the front of heaven
 with fire,—
 My thought with eyes and wings made
 wide makes way
 To find the place of souls that I de-
 sire.

III.

If any place for any soul there be,
Disrobed and disentranced; if the
 might,
The fire and force that filled with ar-
 dent light
The souls whose shadow is half the
 light we see,
Survive, and be suppressed not of the
 night,—
This hour should show what all day
 hid from me.

IV.

Night knows not, neither is it shown to
 day,
By sunlight nor by starlight is it shown,
Nor to the full moon's eye nor footfall
 known,
Their world's untrodden and unkindled
 way;
Nor is the breath nor music of it blown
With sounds of winter or with winds
 of May.

V.

But here, where light and darkness
 reconciled
Hold earth between them as a weanling
 child
Between the balanced hands of death
 and birth,
Even as they held the new-born shape
 of earth
When first life trembled in her limbs
 and smiled,—
Here hope might think to find what
 hope were worth.

VI.

Past Hades, past Elysium, past the long,
Slow, smooth, strong lapse of Lethe;
 past the toil
Wherein all souls are taken as a spoil,
The Stygian web of waters,—if your
 song
Be quenched not, O our brethren, but
 be strong
As ere ye too shook off our temporal
 coil;

VII.

If yet these twain survive your worldly
 breath,
Joy trampling sorrow, life devouring
 death,
If perfect life possess your life all
 through,
And like your words your souls be
 deathless too,
To-night, of all whom night encompass-
 eth,
My soul would commune with one soul
 of you.

VIII.

Above the sunset, might I see thine
 eyes
That were above the sun-dawn in our
 skies,
Son of the songs of morning,—thine
 that were
First lights to lighten that rekindling
 air
Wherethrough men saw the front of
 England rise,
And heard thine loudest of the lyre-
 notes there,—

IX.

If yet thy fire have not one spark the
 less,
O Titan, born of her a Titaness,
Across the sunrise and the sunset's
 mark
Send of thy lyre one sound, thy fire one
 spark,
To change this face of our unworthi-
 ness,
Across this hour dividing light from
 dark;

X.

To change this face of our chill time,
 that hears
No song like thine of all that crowd
 its ears,
Of all its lights that lighten all day long
Sees none like thy most fleet and fiery
 sphere's
Out-lightening Sirius,—in its twilight
 throng,
No thunder and no sunrise like thy
 song.

XI.

Hath not the sea-wind swept the sea-
line bare
To pave with stainless fire, through
stainless air,
A passage for thine heavenlier feet to
tread
Ungrieved of earthly floor-work? hath
it spread
No covering splendid as the sun-god's
hair
To veil or to reveal thy lordlier head?

XII.

Hath not the sunset strewn across the
sea
A way majestic enough for thee?
What hour save this should be thine
hour — and mine,
If thou have care of any less divine
Than thine own soul; if thou take
thought of me,
Marlowe, as all my soul takes thought
of thine?

XIII.

Before the moon's face as before the
sun,
The morning star and evening star are
one
For all men's lands as England. Oh, if
night
Hang hard upon us, — ere our day take
flight,
Shed thou some comfort from thy day
long done
On us pale children of the latter light!

XIV.

For surely, brother and master, and
lord and king,
Where'er thy footfall and thy face
make spring
In all souls' eyes that meet thee where-
soe'er,
And have thy soul for sunshine and
sweet air, —
Some late love of thine old live land
should cling,
Some living love of England, round
thee there.

XV.

Here from her shore, across her sunni-
est sea,
My soul makes question of the sun for
thee,
And waves and beams make answer.
When thy feet
Made her ways flowerier and their
flowers more sweet
With childlike passage of a god to be,
Like spray these waves cast off her foe-
men's fleet.

XVI.

Like foam they flung it from her, and
like weed
Its wrecks were washed from scornful
shoal to shoal,
From rock to rock reverberate; and
the whole
Sea laughed and lightened with a death-
less deed
That sowed our enemies in her field for
seed,
And made her shores fit harborage for
thy soul.

XVII.

Then in her green south fields, a poor
man's child,
Thou hadst thy short sweet fill of half-
blown joy,
That ripens all of us for time to cloy
With full-blown pain and passion, ere
the wild
World caught thee by the fiery heart,
and smiled
To make so swift end of the godlike
boy.

XVIII.

For thou, if ever godlike foot there trod
These fields of ours, wert surely like a
god.
Who knows what splendor of strange
dreams was shed
With sacred shadow and glimmer of
gold and red
From hallowed windows, over stone and
sod,
On thine unbowed, bright, insubmissive
head?

XIX.

The shadow stayed not, but the splendor
 stays,
 Our *brethren*, till the last of English days.
 No day nor night on Eng. or earth shall
 be
 Forever, spring nor summer, Junes nor
 Mays,
 But somewhat as a sound or gleam of
 thee
 Shall come on us like morning from the
 sea.

XX.

Like sunrise never wholly risen, nor yet
 quenched; or like sunset never wholly
 set,
 A light to lighten as from living eyes
 The cold, unfit, close lids of one that lies
 Dead, or a ray returned from death's far
 skies
 To fire us living lest our lives forget.

XXI.

For in that heaven what light of lights
 may be,
 What splendor of what stars, what
 spheres of flame
 Sounding, that none may number nor
 may name,
 We know not, even thy brethren; yea,
 not we
 Whose eyes desire the light that light-
 ened thee,
 Whose ways and thine are one way and
 the same.

XXII.

But if the riddles that in sleep we read,
 And trust them not, be flattering truth
 indeed,
 As he that rose our mightiest called
 them,— he,
 Much higher than thou as thou much
 higher than we,—
 There, might we say, all flower of all
 our seed,
 All singing souls are as one sounding
 sea.

XXIII.

All those that here were of thy kind
 and a
 Beside thee and below thee, full of love,
 Full-souled for song,— and one above
 above
 Whose only light folds all your glories
 in—
 With all birds' notes from nightingale
 to dove
 Fill the world whither we too fain would
 win;

XXIV.

The world that sees in heaven the sove-
 reign light
 Of sunlike Shakespeare, and the fiery
 night
 Whose stars were watched of Webster;
 and beneath,
 The twin-souled brethren of the single
 wreath,
 Grown in king's gardens, plucked from
 pastoral heath,
 Wrought with all flowers for all men's
 heart's delight.

XXV.

And that fixed fervor, iron-red like
 Mars,
 In the mid moving tide of tenderer stars,
 That burned on loves and deeds the
 darkest done,
 Athwart the incestuous prisoner's bride-
 house bars;
 And thine, most highest of all their fires
 but one,
 Our morning star, sole risen before the
 sun.

XXVI.

And one light risen since theirs to run
 such race
 Thou hast seen, O Phosphor, from thy
 pride of place.
 Thou hast seen Shelley, him that was
 to thee
 As light to fire or dawn to lightning;
 me,—
 Me likewise, O our brother, shalt thou
 see,
 And I behold thee, face to glorious
 face?

XXVII.

You twain the same swift year of man
 hood swept
 Down the steep darkness, and our father
 wept.
 And from the gleam of Apollonian tears
 A holier aureole rounds your memories,
 kept
 Most fervent-fresh of all the singing
 spheres,
 And April-colored through all months
 and years.

XXVIII.

You twain, fate spared not half your
 fiery span;
 The longer date fulfils the lesser man.
 Ye from beyond the dark dividing date
 Stand smiling, crowned as gods, with
 foot on fate.
 For stronger was your blessing than his
 ban,
 And earliest whom he struck, he struck
 too late.

XXIX.

Yet love and loathing, faith and unfaith
 yet
 Bind less to greater souls in unison,
 And one desire that makes three spirits
 as one
 Takes great and small as in one spiri-
 tual net
 Woven out of hope toward what shall
 yet be done
 Ere hate or love remember or forget;

XXX.

Woven out of faith and hope and love
 too great
 To bear the bonds of life and death
 and fate;
 Woven out of love and hope and faith
 too dear
 To take the print of doubt and change
 and fear;
 And interwoven with lines of wrath and
 hate
 Blood-red with soils of many a sanguine
 year.

XXXI.

Who cannot hate, can love not: if he
 grieve,
 His tears are barren as the unfruitful
 rain
 That rears no harvest from the green
 sea's plain,
 And as thorns crackling this man's laugh
 is vain.
 Nor can belief touch, kindle, smite, re-
 priev
 His heart who has not heart to dis-
 believe.

XXXII.

But you, most perfect in your hate and
 love,
 Our great twin-spirited brethren; you
 that stand
 Head by head glittering, hand made
 fast in hand,
 And underfoot the fang-drawn worm
 that strove
 To wound you living; from so far above,
 Look love, not scorn, on ours that was
 your land.

XXXIII.

For love we lack, and help and heat
 and light
 To clothe us and to comfort us with
 might.
 What help is ours to take or give? but
 ye—
 Oh, more than sunrise to the blind cold
 sea,
 That wailed aloud with all her waves
 all night,
 Much more, being much more glorious,
 should you be.

XXXIV.

As fire to frost, as ease to toil, as dew
 To flowerless fields, as sleep to slacken-
 ing pain,
 As hope to souls long weaned from
 hope again
 Returning, or as blood revived anew
 To dry-drawn limbs and every pulseless
 vein,—
 Even so toward us should no man be
 but you.

XXXV.

One rose before the sunrise was, and one
 Before the sunset, lovelier than the sun.
 And now the heaven is dark and bright
 and loud
 With wind and starry drift and moon
 and cloud,
 And night's cry rings in straining sheet
 and shroud:
 What help is ours if hope like yours
 be none?

XXXVI.

O well-beloved, our brethren, if ye be,
 Then are we not forsaken. This kind
 earth
 Made fragrant once for all time with
 your birth,
 And bright for all men with your love,
 and worth
 The clasp and kiss and wedlock of the
 sea,
 Were not your mother if not your
 brethren we.

XXXVII.

Because the days were dark with gods
 and kings,
 And in time's hand the old hours of
 time as rods,
 When force and fear set hope and faith
 at odds,
 Ye failed not, nor abased your plume-
 plucked wings;
 And we that front not more disastrous
 things,
 How should we fail in face of kings
 and gods?

XXXVIII.

For now the deep dense plumes of night
 are thinned
 Surely with winnowing of the glimmer-
 ing wind
 Whose feet are fledged with morning;
 and the breath
 Begins in heaven that sings the dark to
 death.
 And all the night wherein men groaned
 and sinned
 Sickness at heart to hear what sundawn
 saith.

XXXIX.

O first-born sons of hope and fairest! ye
 Whose prows first clove the thought-
 unsounded sea
 Whence all the dark dead centuries
 rose to bar
 The spirit of man lest truth should
 make him free,
 The sunrise and the sunset, seeing one
 star,
 Take heart as we to know you that ye
 are.

XL.

Ye rise not, and ye set not: we that say
 Ye rise and set like hopes that set and
 rise
 Look yet but seaward from a land-locked
 bay;
 But where at last the sea's line is the
 sky's,
 And truth and hope one sunlight in
 your eyes,
 No sunrise and no sunset marks their
 day.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN.

IN a coign of the cliff between lowland
 and highland,
 At the sea-down's edge between wind-
 ward and lee,
 Walled round with rocks as an inland
 island,
 The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
 A girle of brushwood and thorn en-
 closes
 The steep square slope of the blos-
 somless bed
 Where the weeds that grew green from
 the graves of its roses
 Now lie dead.
 The fields fall southward, abrupt and
 broken,
 To the low last edge of the long lone
 land.
 If a step should sound or a word be
 spoken,
 Would a ghost not rise at the strange
 guest's hand?

So long have the gray bare walks lain
 guestless,
 Through branches and briars if a man
 make way,
 He shall find no life but the sea-wind's,
 restless
 Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and
 stifled
 That crawls by a track none turn to
 climb
 To the strait waste place that the years
 have rifled
 Of all but the thorns that are touched
 not of time.

The thorns he spares when the rose is
 taken;
 The rocks are left when he wastes
 the plain;
 The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-
 shaken,
 These remain.

Not a flower to be prest of the foot that
 falls not;
 As the heart of a dead man the seed-
 plots are dry;
 From the thicket of thorns whence the
 nightingale calls not,
 Could she call, there were never a
 rose to reply.

Over the meadows that blossom and
 wither,
 Rings but the note of a sea-bird's
 song.

Only the sun and the rain come hither
 All year long.

The sun burns sear, and the rain dishev-
 els
 One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless
 breath.

Only the wind here hovers and revels
 In a round where life seems barren
 as death.

Here there was laughing of old, there
 was weeping,
 Haply, of lovers none ever will
 know,
 Whose eyes went seaward a hundred
 sleeping
 Years ago.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood,
 "Look thither,"
 Did he whisper? "Look forth from
 the flowers to the sea;
 For the foam-flowers endure when the
 rose-blossoms wither,
 And men that love lightly may die —
 But we?"

And the same wind sang, and the same
 waves whitened,
 And or ever the garden's last petals
 were shed,
 In the lips that had whispered, the eyes
 that had lightened,
 Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and
 then went whither?
 And were one to the end — but what
 end who knows?
 Love deep as the sea as a rose must
 wither,
 As the rose-red seaweed that mocks
 the rose.

Shall the dead take thought for the
 dead to love them?
 What love was ever as deep as a grave?
 They are loveless now as the grass
 above them
 Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
 Not known of the cliffs and the fields
 and the sea.

Not a breath of the time that has been
 hovers
 In the air now soft with a summer to
 be.

Not a breath shall there sweeten the
 seasons hereafter
 Of the flowers or the lovers that
 laugh now or weep,
 When as they that are free now of weep-
 ing and laughter
 We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again forever;
 Here change may come not till all
 change end.

From the graves they have made they
 shall rise up never,
 Who have left naught living to rav-
 age and rend.

Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild
ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these
shall be;
Till a last wind's breath, upon all these
blowing,
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise, and the sheer cliff
crumble,
Till terrace and meadow the deep
gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the
high tides humble
The fields that lessen, the rocks that
shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all
things falter,
Stretched out on the spoils that his
own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange
altar,
Death lies dead.

RELICS.

THIS flower that smells of honey and
the sea,
White laurustine, seems in my hand to
be
A white star made of memory long
ago
Lit in the heaven of dear times dead to
me.

A star out of the skies, love used to
know
Here held in hand, a stray left yet to
show
What flowers my heart was full of in
the days
That are long since gone down dead
memory's flow.

Dead memory that revives on doubtful
ways,
Half hearkening what the buried sea
son says,
Out of the world of the unapparent
dead
Where the lost Aprils are, and the lost
Mays.

Flower, once I knew thy star-white
brethren bred
Nigh where the last of all the land
made head
Against the sea, a keen-faced prom-
ontory, —
Flowers on salt wind and sprinkled sea
dews fed.

Their hearts were glad of the free
place's glory;
The wind that sang them all his stormy
story
Had talked all winter to the sleepless
spray,
And as the sea's their hues were hard
and hoary.

Like things born of the sea and the
bright day,
They laughed out at the years that
could not slay,
Live sons and joyous of unquiet
hours,
And stronger than all storms that
range for prey.

And in the close indomitable flow-
ers
A keen-edged odor of the sun and
showers
Was as the smell of the fresh honey-
comb
Made sweet for mouths of none but
paramours.

Out of the hard green wall of leaves
that clomb,
They showed like windfalls of the snow-
soft foam,
Or feathers from the weary south-
wind's wing,
Fair as the spray that it came shore-
ward from.

And thou, as white, what word hast
thou to bring?
If my heart hearken, whereof wilt thou
sing?
For some sign surely thou, too, hast
to bear,
Some word far south was taught thee
of the spring.

White like a white rose, not like these
that were
Fought of the wind's mouth and the
winter air,
Poor tender thing of soft Italian
bloom,
Where once thou grewest, what else
for me grew there?

Born in what spring and on what city's
tomb,
By whose hand wast thou reached, and
plucked for whom?
There hangs about thee, could the
soul's sense tell,
An odor as of love and of love's
doom.

Of days more sweet than thou wast
sweet to smell,
Of flower-soft thoughts that came to
flower and fell,
Of loves that lived a lily's life and
died,
Of dreams now dwelling where dead
roses dwell.

O white birth of the golden mountain-
side
That for the sun's love makes its bosom
wide
At sunrise, and with all its woods and
flowers
Takes in the morning to its heart of
pride!

Thou hast a word of that one land of
ours,
And of the fair town called of the fair
towers,
A word for me of my San Gimig-
nan,
A word of April's greenest-girdled
hours;

Of the breached walls whereon the
wallflowers ran
Called of Saint Fina, breachless now of
man,
Though time with soft feet break
them stone by stone,
Who breaks down hour by hour his
own reign's span;

Of the cliff overcome and overgrown
That all that flowerage clothed as flesh
clothes bone,
That garment of acacias made for
May,
Whereof here lies one witness over-
blown.

The fair brave trees with all their
flowers at play,
How king-like they stood up into the
day!
How sweet the day was with them,
and the night!
Such words of message have dead
flowers to say.

This that the winter and the wind made
bright,
And this that lived upon Italian light,
Before I throw them and these words
away,
Who knows but I what memories too
take flight?

SESTIMA.

I SAW my soul at rest upon a day
As a bird sleeping in the nest of
night,
Among soft leaves that give the star-
light way
To touch its wings but not its eyes
with light;
So that it knew as one in visions may,
And knew not as men waking, of
delight.

This was the measure of my soul's
delight;
It had no power of joy to fly by day,
Nor part in the large lordship of the
light;
But in a secret, moon-beholden way
Had all its will of dreams and pleasant
night,
And all the love and light that sleep-
ers may.

But such life's triumph as men waking
 may
 It might not have to feed its faint
 delight
 Between the stars by night and sun by
 day,
 Shut up with green leaves and a little
 light;
 Because its way was as a lost star's
 way,
 A world's not wholly known of day
 or night.

All loves and dreams and sounds and
 gleams of night
 Made it all music that such minstrels
 may,
 And all they had they gave it of de-
 light;
 But in the full face of the fire of
 day
 What place shall be for any starry
 light,
 What part of heaven in all the wide
 sun's way?

Yet the soul woke not, sleeping by the
 way,
 Watched as a nursing of the large-
 eyed night,
 And sought no strength nor knowledge
 of the day,
 Nor closer touch conclusive of de-
 light,
 Nor mightier joy nor truer than dream-
 ers may,
 Nor more of song than they, nor more
 of light.

For who sleeps once, and sees the secret
 light
 Whereby sleep shows the soul a fair-
 er way
 Between the rise and rest of day and
 night,
 Shall care no more to fare as all men
 may,
 But he his place of pain or of delight,
 There shall he dwell, beholding night
 as day.

Song, have thy day, and take thy fill of
 light
 Before the night be fallen across thy
 way;
 Sing while he may, man hath no long
 delight.

A WASTED VIGIL.

I.

COULDEST thou not watch with me one
 hour? Behold,
 Dawn skims the sea with flying feet of
 gold,
 With sudden feet that graze the gradual
 sea:
 Couldst thou not watch with me?

II.

What, not one hour? For star by star
 the night
 Falls, and her thousands world by world
 take flight;
 They die, and day survives, and what
 of thee?
 Couldst thou not watch with me?

III.

Lo, far in heaven the web of night un-
 done,
 And on the sudden sea the gradual sun;
 Wave to wave answers, tree responds
 to tree:
 Couldst thou not watch with me?

IV.

Sunbeam by sunbeam creeps from line
 to line,
 Foam by foam quickens on the bright-
 ening brine;
 Sail by sail passes, flower by flower gets
 free:
 Couldst thou not watch with me?

V.

Last year, a brief while since, an age
 ago,
 A whole year past, with bud and bloom
 and snow,

O moon that wast in heaven, what
friends were we!
Couldst thou not watch with me?

VI.

Old moons, and last year's flowers, and
last year's snows,
Who now saith to thee, moon? or who
saith, rose?
O dust and ashes, once found fair to see!
Couldst thou not watch with me?

VII.

O dust and ashes, once thought sweet
to smell!
With me it is not, is it with thee, well?
O sea-drift blown from windward back
to lee!
Couldst thou not watch with me?

VIII.

The old year's dead hands are full of
their dead flowers,
The old days are full of dead old loves
of ours,
Born as a rose, and briefer born than
she:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

IX.

Could two days live again of that dead
year,
One would say, seeking us and passing
here,
Where is she? and one answering,
Where is he?
Couldst thou not watch with me?

X.

Nay, those two lovers are not anywhere;
if we were they, none knows us what
we were,
Nor aught of all their barren grief and
glee:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

XI.

Half false, half fair, all feeble, be my
verse
Upon thee not for blessing nor for
curse,

For some must stand, and some must
fall or flee:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

XII.

As a new moon above spent stars thou
wast;
But stars endure after the moon is past,
Couldst thou not watch one hour,
though I watch three?
Couldst thou not watch with me?

XIII.

What of the night? The night is full.
the tide
Storms inland, the most ancient rocks
divide;
Yet some endure, and bow nor head
nor knee:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

XIV.

Since thou art not as these are, go thy
ways;
Thou hast no part in all my nights and
days.
Lie still, sleep on, be glad—as such
things be:
Thou couldst not watch with me.

THE COMPLAINT OF LISA.

(*Double Sestina.*)

DECAMERON. x. 7.

THERE is no woman living that draws
breath
So sad as I, though all things sadden
her.
There is not one upon life's weariest
way
Who is weary as I am weary of all but
death.
Toward whom I look as looks the sun-
flower
All day with all his whole soul toward
the sun;
While in the sun's sight I make moan
all day,
And all night on my sleepless maiden
bed

<p>Weep and call out on death, O Love, and thee, That thou or he would take me to the dead, And know not what thing evil I have done That life should lay such heavy hand on me.</p> <p>Alas! Love, what is this thou wouldst with me? What honor shalt thou have to quench my breath, Or what shall my heart broken profit thee? O Love, O great god Love, what have I done, That thou shouldst hunger so after my death? My heart is harmless as my life's first day: Seek out some false fair woman, and plague her Till her tears even as my tears fill her bed: I am the least flower in thy flowery way, But till my time be come that I be dead, Let me live out my flower-time in the sun, Though my leaves shut before the sun flower.</p> <p>O Love, Love, Love, the kingly sun- flower! Shall he the sun hath looked on look on me, That live down here in shade, out of the sun, Here living in the sorrow and shadow of death? Shall he that feeds his heart full of the day Care to give mine eyes light, or my lips breath? Because she loves him, shall my lord love her Who is as a worm in my lord's kingly way? I shall not see him or know him alive or dead; But thou, I know thee, O Love, and pray to thee</p>	<p>That in brief while my brief life-days be done, And the worm quickly make my mar- riage-bed.</p> <p>For underground there is no sleepless bed: But here since I beheld my sunflower These eyes have slept not, seeing all night and day His sunlike eyes, and face fronting the sun. Wherefore, if anywhere be any death, I would fain find and fold him fast to me, That I may sleep with the world's eld- est dead, With her that died seven centuries since, and her That went last night down the night- wandering way. For this is sleep indeed, when labor is done, Without love, without dreams, and with- out breath, And without thought, O name unnamed! of thee.</p> <p>Ah! but, forgetting all things, shall I thee? Wilt thou not be as now about my bed There underground as here before the sun? Shall not thy vision vex me alive and dead, Thy moving vision without form or breath? I read long since the bitter tale of her Who read the tale of Launcelot on a day, And died, and had no quiet after death, But was moved ever along a weary way, Lost with her love in the underworld; ah me, O my king, O my lordly sunflower, Would God to me, too, such a thing were done!</p> <p>But if such sweet and bitter things be done, Then, flying from life, I shall not fly from thee. For in that living world without a sun</p>
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Thy vision will lay hold upon me
 dead,
 And meet and mock me, and mar my
 peace in death.
 Yet if being wroth, God had such pity
 on her,
 Who was a sinner and foolish in her
 day,
 That even in hell they twain should
 breathe one breath,
 Why should he not in some wise pity
 me?
 So if I sleep not in my soft strait bed,
 I may look up and see my sunflower
 As he the sun, in some divine strange
 way.

O poor my heart, well knowest thou in
 what way
 This sore sweet evil unto us was done.
 For on a holy and a heavy day
 I was arisen out of my still small bed
 To see the knights tilt, and one said to
 me
 "The king;" and seeing him, somewhat
 stopped my breath;
 And if the girl spake more, I heard not
 her,
 For only I saw what I shall see when
 dead,
 A kingly flower of knights, a sunflower,
 That shone against the sunlight like
 the sun,
 And like a fire, O heart, consuming
 thee,
 The fire of love that lights the pyre of
 death.

Howbeit I shall not die an evil death
 Who have loved in such a sad and sin-
 less way,
 That this my love, lord, was no shame
 to thee.
 So when mine eyes are shut against the
 sun,
 O my soul's sun, O the world's sun-
 flower,
 Thou nor no man will quite despise me
 dead.
 And dying I pray with all my low last
 breath
 That thy whole life may be as was that
 day,

That feast-day that made trothplight
 death and me,
 Giving the world light of thy great
 deeds done;
 And that fair face brightening thy bri-
 dal bed,
 That God be good as God hath been to
 her.

That all things goodly and glad remain
 with her,
 All things that make glad life and good-
 ly death;
 That as a bee sucks from a sunflower
 Honey, when summer draws delighted
 breath,
 Her soul may drink of thy soul in like
 way,
 And love make life a fruitful marriage-
 bed
 Where day may bring forth fruits of joy
 to day
 And night to night till days and nights
 be dead.
 And as she gives light of her love to
 thee,
 Give thou to her the old glory of days
 long done;
 And either give some heat of light to me,
 To warm me where I sleep without the
 sun.

O sunflower made drunken with the sun,
 O knight whose lady's heart draws thine
 to her,
 Great king, glad lover, I have a word to
 thee.
 There is a weed lives out of the sun's
 way,
 Hid from the heat deep in the meadow's
 bed,
 That swoons and whitens at the wind's
 least breath,
 A flower star-shaped, that all a summer
 day
 Will gaze her soul out on the sunflower
 For very love till twilight finds her dead.
 But the great sunflower heeds not her
 poor death,
 Knows not when all her loving life is
 done;
 And so much knows my lord the king
 of me.

Ay, all day long he has no eye for
me;
With golden eye following the golden
sun
From rose-colored to purple-pillowed
bed,
From birthplace to the flame-lit place of
death,
From eastern end to western of his
way.

So mine eye follows thee, my sunflower,
So the white star-flower turns and yearns
to thee,
The sick weak weed, not well alive or
dead,
Trode under foot if any pass by her,
Pale, without color of summer or sum-
mer breath
In the shrunk shuddering petals, that
have done
No work but love, and die before the
day.

But thou, to-day, to-morrow, and every
day,
Be glad and great, O love whose love
slays me.

Thy fervent flower made fruitful from
the sun
Shall drop its golden seed in the world's
way,
That all men thereof nourished shall
praise thee
For grain and flower and fruit of works
well done;

Till thy shed seed, O shining sunflower,
Bring forth such growth of the world's
garden-bed

As like the sun shalt outlive age and
death.

And ~~yet~~ I would thine heart had heed
of her
Who loves thee alive; but not till she
be dead.

Come, Love, then, quickly, and take
her utmost breath.

Song, speak for me who am dumb as
are the dead;

From my sad bed of tears I send forth
thee,

To fly all day from sun's birth to sun's
death

Down the sun's way after the flying
sun,
For love of her that gave thee wings
and breath
Ere day be done, to seek the sunflower.

FOR THE FEAST OF GIORDANO
BRUNO,

PHILOSOPHER AND MARTYR.

I.

SON of the lightning and the light that
glows
Beyond the lightning's or the morn-
ing's light,
Soul splendid with all-righteous love
of right,
In whose keen fire all hopes and fears
and woes

Were clean consumed, and from their
ashes rose

Transfigured, and intolerable to
sight

Save of purged eyes whose lids had
cast off night,

In love's and wisdom's likeness when
they close,

Embracing, and between them truth
stands fast,

Embraced of either; thou whose feet
were set

On English earth while this was Eng-
land yet,

Our friend that art, our Sidney's friend
that wast,

Heart harder found and higher than all
men's past,

Shall we not praise thee though thine
own forget?

II.

Lift up thy light on us and on thine
own,

O soul whose spirit on earth was as
a rod

To scourge off priests, a sword to
pierce their God,

A staff for man's free thought to walk
alone,

A lamp to lead him far from shrine and throne
 On ways untrodden where his fathers trod
 Ere earth's heart withered at a high priest's nod,
 And all men's mouths that made not prayer made moan.
 From bonds and torments and the ravening flame,
 Surely thy spirit of sense rose up to greet
 Lucretius, where such only spirits meet,
 And walk with him apart till Shelley came
 To make the heaven of heavens more heavenly sweet,
 And mix with yours a third incorporate name.

AVE ATQUE VALE.

IN MEMORY OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.

Nous devons pourtant lui porter quelques fleurs ;
 Les morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs,
 Et quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux arbres,
 Son vent mélancolique à l'entour de leurs marbres,
 Certe, ils doivent trouver les vivants bien ingrats.

Les Fleurs du Mal.

I.

SHALL I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,
 Brother, on this that was the veil of thee ?
 Or quiet sea-flower moulded by the sea,
 Or simplest growth of meadow-sweet or sorrel,
 Such as the summer-sleepy dryads weave,
 Waked up by snow-soft sudden rains at eve ?

Or wilt thou rather, as on earth before,
 Half-faded fiery blossoms, pale with heat
 And full of bitter summer, but more sweet
 To thee than gleanings of a northern shore
 Trod by no tropic feet ?

II.

For always thee the fervid languid glories
 Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies ;
 Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs
 Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promontories,
 The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave
 That knows not where is that Leucadian grave
 Which hides too deep the supreme head of song.
 Ah ! salt and sterile as her kisses were,
 The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear
 Hither and thither, and vex and work her wrong,
 Blind gods that cannot spare.

III.

Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother,
 Secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us :
 Fierce loves, and lovely leaf-buds poisonous,
 Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other
 Blowing by night in some unbreathed-in clime ;
 The hidden harvest of luxurious time,
 Sin without shape, and pleasure without speech ;
 And where strange dreams in a tumultuous sleep
 Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits weep ;
 And with each face thou sawest the shadow on each,
 Seeing as men sow men reap.

IV.

O sleepless heart and sombre soul un-
 sleeping,
 That were athirst for sleep and no
 more life
 And no more love, for peace and no
 more strife!
 Now the dim gods of death have in
 their keeping
 Spirit and body and all the springs
 of song,
 Is it well now where love can do no
 wrong,
 Where stingless pleasure has no foam
 or fang
 Behind the unopening closure of her
 lips?
 Is it not well where soul from body
 slips,
 And flesh from bone divides without a
 pang
 As dew from flower-bell drips?

V.

It is enough: the end and the beginning
 Are one thing to thee, who art past
 the end.
 O hand unclasped of unbeholden
 friend!
 For thee no fruits to pluck, no palms
 for winning,
 No triumph and no labor and no lust,
 Only dead yew-leaves and a little
 dust.
 O quiet eyes wherein the light saith
 naught,
 Whereto the day is dumb, nor any
 night
 With obscure finger silences your
 sight,
 Nor in your speech the sudden soul
 speaks thought,
 Sleep, and have sleep for light.

VI.

Now all strange hours and all strange
 loves are over,
 Dreams and desires and sombre songs
 and sweet,
 Hast thou found place at the great
 knees and feet
 Of some pale Titan-woman like a lover,

Such as thy vision here solicited,
 Under the shadow of her fair vast
 head,
 The deep division of prodigious breasts,
 The solemn slope of mighty limbs
 asleep,
 The weight of awful tresses that still
 keep
 The savor and shade of old-world pine-
 forests
 Where the wet hill-winds weep?

VII.

Hast thou found any likeness for thy
 vision?
 O gardener of strange flowers, what
 bud, what bloom,
 Hast thou found sown, what gathered
 in the gloom?
 What of despair, of rapture, of deris-
 ion,
 What of life is there, what of ill or
 good?
 Are the fruits gray like dust, or bright
 like blood?
 Does the dim ground grow any seed of
 ours,
 The faint fields quicken any terrene
 root,
 In low lands where the sun and moon
 are mute,
 And all the stars keep silence? Are
 there flowers
 At all, or any fruit?

VIII.

Alas! but though my flying song flies
 after,
 O sweet strange elder singer, thy
 more fleet
 Singing, and footprints of thy fleet
 feet,
 Some dim derision of mysterious laugh-
 ter
 From the blind tongueless warders of
 the dead,
 Some gainless glimpse of Proser-
 pine's veiled head,
 Some little sound of unregarded tears
 Wept by effaced unprofitable eyes,
 And from pale mouths some cadence
 of dead sighs, —

These, only these, the hearkening spirit
hears,
Sees only such things rise.

IX.

Thou art far too far for wings of words
to follow,
Far too far off for thought or any
prayer.

What ails us with thee, who art wind
and air?

What ails us gazing where all seen is
hollow?

Yet with some fancy, yet with some
desire,

Dreams pursue death as winds a fly-
ing fire,

Our dreams pursue our dead, and do
not find.

Still, and more swift than they, the
thin flame flies,

The low light fails us in elusive skies,
Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf, and
blind

Are still the eluded eyes.

X.

Not thee, oh! never thee, in all time's
changes,

Not thee, but this the sound of thy
sad soul,

The shadow of thy swift spirit, this
shut scroll

I lay my hand on, and not death es-
tranges

My spirit from communion of thy
song;

These memories and these melodies
that throng

Veiled porches of a Muse funereal, —
These I salute, these touch, these
clasp and fold

As though a hand were in my hand
to hold,

Or through mine ears a mourning musi-
cal

Of many mourners rolled.

XI.

I among these, I also, in such station
As when the pyre was charred, and
piled the sods,

And offering to the dead made, and
their gods,

The old mourners had, standing to make
libation,

I stand, and to the gods and to the
dead

Do reverence without prayer or praise,
and shed

Offering to these unknown, the gods of
gloom,

And what of honey and spice my
seed-lands bear,

And what I may of fruits in this
chilled air,

And lay, Orestes-like, across the tomb
A curl of severed hair.

XII.

But by no hand nor any treason stricken,
Not like the low-lying head of Him,

the king,

The flame that made of Troy a ruin-
ous thing,

Thou liest, and on this dust no tears
could quicken

There fall no tears like theirs that all
men hear

Fall tear by sweet imperishable tear
Down the opening leaves of holy poets'
pages.

Thee not Orestes, not Electra,
mourns;

But bending us-ward with memorial
urns

The most high Muses that fulfil all ages
Weep, and our God's heart yearns.

XIII.

For, sparing of his sacred strength, not
often

Among us darkling here the lord of
light

Makes manifest his music and his
might

In hearts that open and in lips that
soften

With the soft flame and heat of songs
that shine.

Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter
wine,

And nourished them indeed with bitter
bread;
Yet surely from his hand thy soul's
food came,
The fire that scarred thy spirit at his
flame
Was lighted, and thine hungering heart
he fed
Who feeds our hearts with fame.

XIV.

Therefore he too now at thy soul's sun-
setting,
God of all suns and songs, he too
bends down
To mix his laurel with thy cypress
crown,
And save thy dust from blame and from
forgetting.
Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert
and art,
Compassionate, with sad and sacred
heart,
Mourns thee of many his children the
last dead,
And hallows with strange tears and
alien sighs
Thine unmelodious mouth and sun-
less eyes,
And over thine irrevocable head
Sheds light from the under skies.

xv.

And one weeps with him in the ways
Lethæan,
And stains with tears her changing
bosom chill;
That obscure Venus of the hollow
hill,
That thing transformed which was the
Cytherean,
With lips that lost their Grecian laugh
divine
Long since, and face no more called
Erycine
A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god.
Thee also with fair flesh and singing
spell
Did she, a sad and second prey, com-
pel
Into the footless places once more trod,
And shadows hot from hell.

XVI.

And now no sacred staff shall break in
blossom,
No choral salutation lure to light
A spirit sick with perfume and sweet,
night
And love's tired eyes and hands and
barren bosom.
(There is no help for these things;
none to mend,
And none to mar; not all our songs,
O friend!
Will make death clear, or make life
durable.
Howbeit with rose and ivy and wild
vine
And with wild notes about this dust
of thine
At least I fill the place where white
dreams dwell,
And wreath an unseen shrine.

XVII.

Sleep; and if life was bitter to thee,
pardon,
If sweet, give thanks; thou hast no
more to live;
And to give thanks is good, and to
forgive.
Out of the mystic and the mournful
garden
Where all day through thine hands
in barren braid
Wove the sick flowers of secrecy
and shade,
Green buds of sorrow and sin, and
remnants gray,
Sweet-smelling, pale with poison, san-
guine-hearted,
Passions that sprang from sleep and
thoughts that started,
Shall death not bring us all as thee one
day
Among the days departed?

XVIII.

For thee, oh, now a silent soul, my
brother,
Take at my hands this garland, and
farewell.
Thine is the leaf, and chill the wintry
smell,

And chill the solemn earth, a fatal
 mother,
 With sadder than the Niobeian womb,
 And in the hollow of her breasts a
 tomb.
 Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are
 done:
 There lies not any troublous thing
 before,
 Nor sight nor sound to war against
 thee more,
 For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
 All waters as the shore. 7

MEMORIAL VERSES

ON THE DEATH OF THÉOPHILE GAU-
 TIER.

DEATH, what hast thou to do with me?
 So saith
 Love, with eyes set against the face of
 Death;
 What have I done, O thou strong
 Death, to thee,
 That mine own lips should wither from
 thy breath?

Though thou be blind as fire or as the
 sea,
 Why should thy waves and storms make
 war on me?
 Is it for hate thou hast to find me fair,
 Or for desire to kiss, if it might be, —

My very mouth of song, and kill me
 there?
 So with keen rains vexing his crownless
 hair,
 With bright feet bruised from no de-
 lightful way,
 Through darkness and the disenchant-
 ed air, —

Lost Love went weeping half a winter's
 day.
 And the armed wind that smote him
 seemed to say,
 How shall the dew live when the
 dawn is fled,
 Or wherefore should the Mayflower out-
 last May?

Then Death took Love by the right
 hand, and said,
 Smiling, Come now, and look upon thy
 dead.

But Love cast down the glories of his
 eyes,
 And bowed down like a flower his
 flowerless head.

And Death spake, saying, What ails
 thee in such wise,
 Being god, to shut thy sight up from the
 skies?

If thou canst see not, hast thou ears
 to hear?
 Or is thy soul too as a leaf that dies?

Even as he spake with fleshless lips of
 fear,
 But soft as sleep sings in a tired man's
 ear,
 Behold, the winter was not, and its
 might
 Fell, and fruits broke forth of the bar-
 ren year.

And upon earth was largess of great
 light,
 And moving music winged for world-
 wide flight,
 And shapes and sounds of gods be-
 held and heard,
 And day's foot set upon the neck of
 night.

And with such song the hollow ways
 were stirred
 As of a god's heart hidden in a bird,
 Or as the whole soul of the sun in
 spring
 Should find full utterance in one flower-
 soft word, —

And all the season should break forth
 and sing
 From one flower's lips, in one rose tri-
 umphing;
 Such breath and light of song as of a
 flame
 Made ears and spirits of them that heard
 it ring.

And Love beholding knew not for the same
 The shape that led him, nor in face nor name;
 For he was bright, and great of thews,
 and fair,
 And in Love's eyes he was not Death,
 but Fame.

Not that gray ghost whose life is empty
 and bare,
 And his limbs moulded out of mortal
 air,
 A cloud of change that shifts into a
 shower,
 And dies, and leaves no light for time to
 wear;

But a god clothed with his own joy and
 power,
 A god re-risen out of his mortal
 hour
 Immortal, king and lord of time and
 space,
 With eyes that look on them as from a
 tower.

And where he stood the pale sepulchral
 place
 Bloomed, as new life might in a blood-
 less face,
 And where men sorrowing came to
 seek a tomb
 With funeral flowers and tears for grief
 and grace, —

They saw with light as of a world in
 bloom
 The portal of the House of Fame
 illumine
 The ways of life wherein we toiling
 tread,
 And watched the darkness as a brand
 consume.

And through the gates where rule the
 deathless dead
 The sound of a new singer's soul was
 shed
 That sang among his kinsfolk, and a
 beam
 Shot from the star on a new ruler's
 head;

A new star lightening the Lethæan
 stream,
 A new song mixed into the song sa-
 preme
 Made of all souls of singers and their
 merit,
 That makes of life and time and death
 a dream:

Thy star, thy song, O soul that in our
 sight
 Wast as a sun that made for man's
 delight
 Flowers and all fruits in season, be-
 ing so near
 The sun-god's face, our god that gives
 us light.

To him, of all gods that we love or
 fear,
 Thou among all men by thy name wast
 dear, —
 Dear to the god that gives us spirit
 of song
 To bind and burn all hearts of men
 that hear;

The god that makes men's words too
 sweet and strong
 For life or time or death to do them
 wrong,
 Who sealed with his thy spirit for a
 sign,
 And filled it with his breath thy whole
 life long;

Who made thy moist lips fiery with new
 wine
 Pressed from the grapes of song the
 sovereign vine,
 And with all love of all things loveli-
 est
 Gave thy soul power to make them
 more divine, —

That thou might'st breathe upon the
 breathless rest
 Of marble, till the brows and lips and
 breast
 Felt fall from off them as a cancelled
 curse
 That speechless sleep wherewith they
 lived opprest;

Who gave thee strength and heat of spirit to pierce All clouds of form and color that disperse, And leave the spirit of beauty to re-mould In types of clean chryselephantine verse;	There all the crowned Hellenic heads, and there The old gods who made men godlike as they were, The lyric lips wherefrom all songs take fire, Live eyes, and light of Apollonian hair.
Who gave thee words more golden than fine gold To carve in shapes more glorious than of old, And build thy songs up in the sight of time As statues set in godhead manifold, —	There, round the sovereign passion of that lyre Which the stars hear, and tremble with desire, The ninefold light Pierian is made one That here we see divided, and aspire, —
In sight and scorn of temporal change and clime That meet the sun re-risen with refluent rhyme — As god to god might answer face to face — From lips whereon the morning strikes sublime.	Seeing, after this or that crown to be won; But where they hear the singing of the sun, All form, all sound, all color, and all thought Are as one body and soul in unison.
Dear to the god, our god who gave thee place Among the chosen of days, the royal race, The lords of light, whose eyes of old and ears Saw even on earth and heard him for a space.	There the song sung shines as a picture wrought, The painted mouths sing that on earth say naught, The carven limbs have sense of blood and growth, And large-eyed life that seeks nor lacks not aught.
There are the souls of those once mortal years That wrought with fire of joy and light of tears, In words divine as deeds that grew thereof, Such music as he swoons with love who hears.	There all the music of thy living mouth Lives, and all loves wrought of thine hand in youth, And bound about the breasts and brows with gold, And colored pale or dusk from north or south.
There are the lives that lighten from above Our under lives, the spherulic souls that move Through the ancient heaven of song-illumined air, Whence we that hear them singing die with love.	Fair living things made to thy will of old, Born of thy lips, no births of mortal mould, That in the world of song about thee wait Where thought and truth are one and manifold.
	Within the graven lintels of the gate That here divides our vision and our fate, The dreams we walk in and the truths of sleep, All sense and spirit have life inseparate.

There, what one thinks, is his to grasp and keep;	The lovely laughter, the clear tears, the call
There are no dreams, but very joys to reap;	Of love to love on ways where shadows fall,
No foiled desires that die before de- light,	Through doors of dim division and disguise,
No fears to see across our joys, and weep.	And music made of doubts unmusical;
There hast thou all thy will of thought and sight,	The love that caught strange light from death's own eyes, ¹
All hope for harvest, and all heaven for flight;	And filled death's lips with fiery words and sighs,
The sunrise of whose golden-mouthed glad head	And half asleep let feed from veins of his
To paler songless ghosts was heat and light.	Her close red warm snake's mouth, Egyptian-wise :
Here, where the sunset of our year is red,	And that great night of love more strange than this, ²
Men think of thee as of the summer dead,	When she that made the whole world's bale and bliss
Gone forth before the snows, before thy day,	Made king of the whole world's de- sire a slave,
With unshod feet, with brows un- chapleted.	And killed him in mid kingdom with a kiss;
Couldst thou not wait till age had wound, they say,	Veiled loves that shifted shapes and shafts, and gave, ³
Round those wreathed brows his soft white blossoms? Nay,	Laughing, strange gifts to hands that durst not crave,
Why shouldst thou vex thy soul with this harsh air, —	Flowers doubled-blossomed, fruits of scent and hue
Thy bright-winged soul, once free to take its way?	Sweet as the bride-bed, stranger than the grave;
Nor for men's reverence hadst thou need to wear	All joys and wonders of old lives and new
The holy flower of gray time-ballowed hair;	That ever in love's shine or shadow grew,
Nor were it fit that aught of thee grew old,	And all the grief whereof he dreams and grieves,
Fair lover all thy days of all things fair.	And all sweet roots fed on his light and dew;
And hear we not thy words of molten gold	All these through thee our spirit of sense perceives,
Singing? or is their light and heat a-cold	As threads in the unseen woof thy music weaves,
Whereat men warmed their spirits? Nay, for all	
These yet are with us, ours to hear and hold.	

¹ La Morte Amoureuse.

² Une Nuit de Cléopâtre.

³ Mademoiselle de Maupin.

Birds caught and snared that fill our ears with thee,
Bay-blossoms in thy wreath of brow-bound leaves.

Mixed with the masque of death's old comedy
Though thou too pass, have here our flowers, that we
For all the flowers thou gav'st upon thee shed,
And pass not crownless to Persephone.

Blue lotus-blooms and white and rosy-red
We wind with poppies for thy silent head,
And on this margin of the sundering sea
Leave thy sweet light to rise upon the dead.

AGE AND SONG.

(TO BARRY CORNWALL.)

I.

IN vain men tell us time can alter
Old loves, or make old memories falter;
That with the old year the old year's life closes.
The old dew still falls on the old sweet flowers,
The old sun revives the new-fledged hours,
The old summer rears the new-born roses.

II.

Much more a Muse that bears upon her Raiment and wreath and flower of honor,
Gathered long since and long since woven,
Fades not or falls as fall the vernal Blossoms that bear no fruit eternal,
By summer or winter charred or cloven.

III.

No time casts down, no time upraises,
Such loves, such memories, and such praises,

As need no grace of sun or shower,
No saving screen from frost or thunder,
To tend and house around and under
The imperishable and fearless flower.

IV.

Old thanks, old thoughts, old aspirations,
Outlive men's lives and lives of nations,
Dead, but for one thing which survives —
The inalienable and unpriced treasure,
The old joy of power, the old pride of pleasure,
That lives in light above men's lives.

IN MEMORY OF BARRY CORNWALL.

(OCT. 4, 1874.)

I.

IN the garden of death, where the singers whose names are deathless
One with another make music unheard of men,
Where the dead sweet roses fade not of lips long breathless,
And the fair eyes shine that shall weep not or change again,
Who comes now crowned with the blossom of snow-white years?
What music is this that the world of the dead men hears?

II.

Beloved of men, whose words on our lips were honey,
Whose name in our ears and our fathers' ears was sweet,
Like summer gone forth of the land his songs made sunny,
To the beautiful veiled bright world where the glad ghosts meet,
Child, father, bridegroom and bride, and anguish and rest,
No soul shall pass of a singer than this more blest.

III.

Blest for the years' sweet sake that were
 filled and brightened,
 As a forest with birds, with the fruit
 and the flower of his song;
 For the souls' sake blest that heard, and
 their cares were lightened,
 For the hearts' sake blest that have
 fostered his name so long;
 By the living and dead lips blest that
 have loved his name,
 And clothed with their praise and
 crowned with their love for fame.

IV.

Ah, fair and fragrant his fame as flowers
 that close not,
 That shrink not by day for heat or
 for cold by night,
 As a thought in the heart shall increase
 when the heart's self knows not,
 Shall endure in our ears as a sound,
 in our eyes as a light;
 Shall wax with the years that wane
 and the seasons' chime,
 As a white rose thornless that grows in
 the garden of time.

V.

The same year calls, and one goes hence
 with another,
 And men sit sad that were glad for
 their sweet songs' sake;
 The same year beckons, and elder with
 younger brother
 Takes mutely the cup from his hand
 that we all shall take.¹
 They pass ere the leaves be past or the
 snows be come;
 And the birds are loud, but the lips
 that outsang them dumb.

VI.

Time takes them home that we loved,
 fair names and famous,
 To the soft long sleep, to the broad
 sweet bosom of death;
 But the flower of their souls he shall
 take not away to shame us,

¹ Sydney Dobell died Aug. 22, 1874.

Nor the lips lack song forever that
 now lack breath.
 For with us shall the music and per-
 fume that die not dwell,
 Though the dead to our dead bid wel-
 come, and we farewell.

EPICEDE.

(James Lorimer Graham died at Florence, April
 30, 1876.)

LIFE may give for love to death
 Little: what are life's gifts worth
 To the dead wrapt round with earth?
 Yet from lips of living breath
 Sighs or words we are fain to give,
 All that yet, while yet we live,
 Life may give for love to death.

Dead so long before his day,
 Passed out of the Italian sun
 To the dark where all is done
 Fallen upon the verge of May;
 Here at life's and April's end
 How should song salute my friend
 Dead so long before his day?

Not a kindlier life or sweeter,
 Time, that lights and quenches men,
 Now may quench or light again;
 Mingling with the mystic metre
 Woven of all men's lives with his,
 Not a clearer note than this,
 Not a kindlier life or sweeter.

In this heavenliest part of earth
 He that living loved the light,
 Light and song, may rest aright,
 One in death, if strange in birth,
 With the deathless dead that make
 Life the lovelier for their sake
 In this heavenliest part of earth.

Light, and song, and sleep at last, —
 Struggling hands and suppliant knees
 Get no goodlier gift than these.
 Song that holds remembrance fast,
 Light that lightens death, attend
 Round their graves who have to
 friend
 Light, and song, and sleep at last.

INFERIÆ.

SPRING, and the light and sound of
things on earth
Re-quickening, all within our green
sea's girth ;
A time of passage or a time of birth
Fourscore years since as this year,
first and last.

The sun is all about the world we see,
The breath and strength of very spring ;
and we
Live, love, and feed on our own hearts :
but he
Whose heart fed mine has passed
into the past.

Past, all things born with sense and
blood and breath ;
The flesh hears naught that now the
spirit saith.
If death be like as birth, and birth
as death,
The first was fair — more fair should
be the last.

Fourscore years since, and come but
one month more,
The count were perfect of his mortal
score
Whose sail went seaward yesterday
from shore
To cross the last of many an unsailed
sea.

Light, love, and labor up to life's last
height, —
These three were stars unsetting in his
sight,
Even as the sun is life and heat and
light,
And sets not nor is dark when dark
are we.

The life, the spirit, and the work were one
That here — ah! who shall say, that
here are done ?
Not I, that know not; father, not thy son,
For all the darkness of the night and
sea.

MARCH 5, 1877.

A BIRTH-SONG.

(For Olivia Frances Madox Rossetti, born Sept
20, 1875.)

OUT of the dark sweet sleep
Where no dreams laugh or weep,
Borne through bright gates of birth
Into the dim sweet light
Where day still dreams of night
While heaven takes form on earth,
White rose of spirit and flesh, red lily
of love,
What note of song have we
Fit for the birds and thee,
Fair nestling couched beneath the
mother-dove ?

Nay, in some more divine
Small speechless song of thine
Some news too good for words,
Heart-hushed and smiling, we
Might hope to have of thee,
The youngest of God's birds,
If thy sweet sense might mix itself with
ours,
If ours might understand
The language of thy land,
Ere thine become the tongue of mortal
hours :

Ere thy lips learn too soon
Their soft first human tune,
Sweet, but less sweet than now,
And thy raised eyes to read
Glad and good things indeed,
But none so sweet as thou :
Ere thought lift up their flower-soft lids
to see
What life and love on earth
Bring thee for gifts at birth,
But none so good as thine who hast
given us thee :

Now, ere thy sense forget
The heaven that fills it yet,
Now, sleeping or awake,
If thou couldst tell, or we
Ask and be heard of thee,
For love's undying sake,

From thy dumb lips divine and bright
 mute speech
 Such news might touch our ear
 That then would burn to hear
 Too high a message now for man's to
 reach.

Ere the gold hair of corn
 Had withered wast thou born,
 To make the good time glad;
 The time that but last year
 Fell colder than a tear
 On hearts and hopes turned sad.
 High hopes and hearts requickening in
 thy dawn,
 Even theirs whose life-springs, child,
 Filled thine with life and smiled,
 But then wept blood for half their own
 withdrawn.¹

If death and birth be one,
 And set with rise of sun,
 And truth with dreams divine,
 Some word might come with thee
 From over the still sea
 Deep hid in shade or shine,
 Crossed by the crossing sails of death
 and birth,
 Word of some sweet new thing
 Fit for such lips to bring,
 Some word of love, some afterthought
 of earth.

If love be strong as death,
 By what so natural breath
 As thine could this be said?
 By what so lovely way
 Could love send word to say
 He lives and is not dead?
 Such word alone were fit for only thee,
 If his and thine have met
 Where spirits rise and set,
 His whom we see not, thine whom
 scarce we see:

His there new-born, as thou
 New-born among us now;
 His, here so fruitful-souled,

¹ Oliver Madox Brown died Nov. 5, 1874, in his twentieth year.

Now veiled and silent here,
 Now dumb as thou last year,
 A ghost of one year old:
 If lights that change their sphere in
 changing meet,
 Some ray might his not give
 To thine who wast to live,
 And make thy present with his past life
 sweet?

Let dreams that laugh or weep,
 All glad and sad dreams, sleep;
 Truth more than dreams is dear.
 Let thoughts that change and fly,
 Sweet thoughts and swift, go by;
 More than all thought is here.
 More than all hope can forge, or mem-
 ory feign,
 The life that in our eyes,
 Made out of love's life, lies,
 And flower-like fed with love for sun
 and rain.

Twice royal in his root
 The sweet small olive-shoot
 Here set in sacred earth;
 Twice dowered with glorious grace
 From either heaven-born race
 First blended in its birth;
 Fair god or genius of so fair an hour,
 For love of either name
 Twice crowned, with love and fame,
 Guard and be gracious to the fair-named
 flower.

Oct. 19, 1875.

EX-VOTO.

WHEN their last hour shall rise
 Pale on these mortal eyes,
 Herself like one that dies,
 And kiss me dying
 The cold last kiss, and fold
 Close round my limbs her cold
 Soft shade as raiment rolled,
 And leave them lying,—

If aught my soul would say
 Might move to hear me pray
 The birth-god of my day
 That he might hearken,

This grace my heart should crave, —
To find no landward grave
That worldly springs make brave,
World's winters darken, —

Nor grow through gradual hours
The cold blind seed of flowers
Made by new beams and showers
From limbs that moulder,
Nor take my part with earth;
But find for death's new birth
A bed of larger girth,
More chaste and colder.

Not earth's for spring and fall,
Not earth's at heart, not all
Earth's making, though men call
Earth only mother,
Not hers at heart she bare
Me, but thy child, O fair
Sea, and thy brother's care,
The wind thy brother.

Yours was I born, and ye,
The sea-wind and the sea,
Made all my soul in me
A song forever,
A harp to string and smite —
For love's sake of the bright
Wind and the sea's delight,
To fail them never :

Not while on this side death
I hear what either saith,
And drink of either's breath
With heart's thanksgiving
That in my veins like wine
Some sharp salt blood of thine,
Some springtide pulse of brine,
Yet leaps up living.

When thy salt lips well-nigh
Sucked in my mouth's last sigh,
Grudged I so much to die
This death as others?
Was it no ease to think
The chalice from whose brink
Fate gave me death to drink
Was thine, — my mother's ?

Thee too, the all-fostering earth,
Fair as thy fairest birth,

More than thy worthiest worth,
We call, we know thee,
More sweet and just and dread
Than live men highest of head
Or even thy holiest dead
Laid low below thee.

The sunbeam on the sheaf,
The dew-fall on the leaf,
All joy, all grace, all grief,
Are thine for giving :
Of thee our loves are born,
Our lives and loves, that mourn
And triumph ; tares with corn,
Dead seed with living ;

All good and ill things done
In eye-shot of the sun
At last in thee made one
Rest well contented ;
All words of all man's breath,
And works he doth or saith,
All wholly done to death,
None long lamented.

A slave to sons of thee,
Thou, seeming, yet art free ;
But who shall make the sea
Serve even in seeming ?
What plough shall bid it bear
Seed to the sun and the air,
Fruit for thy strong sons' fare,
Fresh wine's foam streaming ?

What old-world son of thine,
Made drunk with death as wine,
Hath drunk the bright sea's brine
With lips of laughter ?
Thy blood they drink ; but he
Who hath drunken of the sea
Once deeper than of thee
Shall drink not after.

Of thee thy sons of men
Drink deep, and thirst again, —
For wine in feasts, and then
In fields for slaughter ;
But thirst shall touch not him
Who hath felt with sense grown dim
Rise, covering lip and limb,
The wan sea's water.

All fire of thirst that aches
 The salt sea cools and slakes
 More than all springs or lakes,
 Freshets or shallows ;
 Wells where no beam can burn
 Through frondage of the fern
 That hides from hart and hern
 The haunt it hallows.

Peace with all graves on earth
 For death or sleep or birth
 Be always, one in worth
 One with another ;
 But when my time shall be,
 O mother, O my sea,
 Alive or dead, take me,
 Me too, my mother !

PASTICHE.

Now the days are all gone over
 Of our singing, love by lover,
 Days of summer-colored seas
 Blown adrift through beam and breeze.

Now the nights are all past over
 Of our dreaming, dreams that hover
 In a mist of fair false things,
 Nights afloat on wide wan wings.

Now the loves with faith for mother,
 Now the fears with hope for brother,
 Scarce are with us as strange words,
 Notes from songs of last year's birds.

Now all good that comes or goes is
 As the smell of last year's roses,
 As the radiance in our eyes
 Shot from summer's ere he dies.

Now the morning faintlier risen
 Seems no god come forth of prison,
 But a bird of plume-plucked wing,
 Pale with thoughts of evening.

Now hath hope, out-raced in running,
 Given the torch up of his cunning,
 And the palm he thought to wear,
 Even to his own strong child, — despair.

BEFORE SUNSET.

IN the lower lands of day
 On the hither side of night,
 There is nothing that will stay,
 There are all things soft to sight ;
 Lighted shade and shadowy light
 In the wayside and the way,
 Hours the sun has spared to smite,
 Flowers the rain has left to play.

Shall these hours run down and say
 No good thing of thee and me ?
 Time that made us and will slay
 Laughs at love in me and thee ;
 But if here the flowers may see
 One whole hour of amorous breath,
 Time shall die, and love shall be
 Lord as time was over death.

SONG.

LOVE laid his sleepless head
 On a thorny rosy bed ;
 And his eyes with tears were red,
 And pale his lips as the dead.

And fear and sorrow and scorn
 Kept watch by his head forlorn,
 Till the night was overworn,
 And the world was merry with morn.

And Joy came up with the day,
 And kissed Love's lips as he lay,
 And the watchers ghostly and gray
 Sped from his pillow away.

And his eyes as the dawn grew bright,
 And his lips waxed ruddy as light :
 Sorrow may reign for a night,
 But day shall bring back delight.

A VISION OF SPRING IN
WINTER.

I.

O TENDER time that love thinks long
 to see,
 Sweet foot of spring that with her
 footfall sows

Late snow-like flowery leavings of the
 snows,
 Be not too long irresolute to be!
 O mother-month, where have they hid-
 den thee?
 Out of the pale time of the flowerless
 rose,
 I reach my heart out toward the spring-
 time lands.
 I stretch my spirit forth to the fair
 hours,
 The purplest of the prime;
 I lean my soul down over them, with
 hands
 Made wide to take the ghostly
 growths of flowers;
 I send my love back to the lovely
 time.

II.

Where has the greenwood hid thy
 gracious head?
 Veiled with what visions while the
 gray world grieves,
 Or muffled with what shadows of
 green leaves,
 With warm intangible green shadows
 spread
 To sweeten the sweet twilight for thy
 bed?
 What sleep enchants thee? what de-
 light deceives?
 Where the deep dreamlike dew before
 the dawn
 Feels not the fingers of the sunlight
 yet
 Its silver web unweave,
 Thy footless ghost on some unfooted
 lawn
 Whose air the unrisen sunbeams fear
 to fret
 Lives a ghost's life of daylong dawn
 and eve.

III.

Sunrise it sees not, neither set of star,
 Large nightfall, nor imperial pleni-
 lune,
 Nor strong sweet shape of the full-
 breasted noon;
 But where the silver-sandalled shadows
 aie,

Too soft for arrows of the sun to mar,
 Moves with the mild gait of an un-
 grown moon:
 Hard overhead the half-lit crescent
 swims,
 The tender-colored night draws hard-
 ly breath,
 The light is listening;
 They watch the dawn of slender-shapen
 limbs,
 Virginal, born again of doubtful death,
 Chill foster-father of the weanling
 spring.

IV.

As sweet desire of day before the day,
 As dreams of love before the true
 love born,
 From the outer edge of winter over-
 worn
 The ghost arisen of May before the
 May
 Takes through dim air her unawakened
 way,
 The gracious ghost of morning risen
 ere morn.
 With little unblown breasts and child-
 eyed looks
 Following, the very maid, the girl-
 child spring,
 Lifts windward her bright brows,
 Dips her light feet in warm and moving
 brooks,
 And kindles with her own mouth's
 coloring
 The fearful firstlings of the plume-
 less boughs.

V.

I seek thee sleeping, and awhile I see,
 Fair face that art not, how thy maiden
 breath.
 Shall put at last the deadly days to
 death,
 And fill the fields and fire the woods
 with thee,
 And seaward hollows where my feet
 would be
 When heaven shall hear the word
 that April saith

To change the cold heart of the weary
time,
To stir and soften all the time to
tears,
Tears joyfuller than mirth;
As even to May's clear height the young
days climb
With feet not swifter than those fair
first years
Whose flowers revive not with thy
flowers on earth.

VI.

I would not bid thee, though I might,
give back
One good thing youth has given and
borne away:
I crave not any comfort of the day
That is not, nor on time's re-trodden
track
Would turn to meet the white-robed
hours or black
That long since left me on their mor-
tal way;
Nor light nor love that has been, nor
the breath
That comes with morning from the
sun to be,
And sets light hope on fire;
No fruit, no flower thought once too
fair for death,
No flower nor hour once fallen from
life's green tree,
No leaf once plucked, or once ful-
filled desire.

VII.

The morning song beneath the stars
that fled
With twilight through the moonless
mountain air,
While youth with burning lips and
wreathless hair
Sang toward the sun that was to crown
his head,
Rising; the hopes that triumphed and
fell dead,
The sweet swift eyes and songs of
hours that were,—
These may'st thou not give back for-
ever; these.

As at the sea's heart all her wrecks
lie waste,
Lie deeper than the sea:
But flowers thou may'st, and winds, and
hours of ease,
And all its April to the world thou
may'st
Give back, and half my April back
to me.

AT PARTING.

FOR a day and night Love sang to us,
played with us,
Folded us round from the dark and
the light;
And our hearts were fulfilled of the
music he made with us,
Made with our hearts and our lips while
he stayed with us,
Stayed in mid passage his pinions
from flight
For a day and a night.

From his foes that kept watch with his
wings had he hidden us,
Covered us close from the eyes that
would smite,
From the feet that had tracked and the
tongues that had chidden us
Sheltering in shade of the myrtles for-
bidden us
Spirit and flesh growing one with
delight
For a day and a night.

But his wings will not rest, and his feet
will not stay for us:
Morning is here in the joy of its
might;
With his breath has he sweetened a
night and a day for us:
Now let him pass, and the myrtles make
way for us;
Love can but last in us here at his
height
For a day and a night.

THE WHITE CZAR.

[In an English magazine of 1877, there appeared a version of some insolent lines addressed by "A Russian Poet to the Empress of India." To these the first of the two following sonnets was designed to serve by way of counterblast. The writer will scarcely be suspected of royalism or imperialism, but it seemed to him that an insult levelled by Muscovite lips at the ruler of England might perhaps be less unfriendly than unofficially resented by an Englishman who was also a republican.]

I.

GEHAZI by the hue that chills thy
check
And Pilate by the hue that sears thine
hand
Whence all earth's waters cannot
wash the brand
That signs thy soul a manslayer's
though thou speak
All Christ, with lips most murderous
and most meek —
Thou set thy foot where England's
used to stand!
Thou reach thy rod forth over Indian
land!
Slave of the slaves that call thee lord,
and weak
As their foul tongues who praise thee!
son of them
Whose presence put the snows and stars
to shame
In centuries dead and damned that
reek below
Curse-consecrated, crowned with crime
and flame,
To them that bare thee like them
shalt thou go
Forth of man's life, — a leper white
as snow.

II.

Call for clear water, wash thine hands,
be clean,
Cry, *What is truth?* O Pilate! thou
shalt know
Haply too soon, and gnash thy teeth
for woe
Ere the outer darkness take thee round
unseen

That hides the red ghosts of thy race
obscene
Bound nine times round with hell's
most dolorous flow,
And in its pools thy crownless head
lie low
By his of Spain who dared an English
queen
With half a world to hearten him for
fight,
Till the wind gave his warriors and
their might
To shipwreck and the corpse-encum-
bered sea.
But thou, take heed, ere yet thy lips
wax white,
Lest as it was with Philip so it
be,
O white of name and red of hand,
with thee!

RIZPAH.

How many sons, how many genera-
tions,
For how long years hast thou be-
wept, and known
Nor end of torment nor surcease of
moan,
Rachel or Rizpah, wofullest of na-
tions,
Crowned with the crowning sign of
desolations,
And couldst not even scare off with
hand or groan
Those carrion birds devouring bone
by bone
The children of thy thousand tribula-
tions?
Thou wast our warrior once; thy sons
long dead
Against a foe less foul than this made
head,
Poland, in years that sound and shine
afar;
Ere the east beheld in thy bright sword-
blade's stead
The rotten corpse-light of the Russian
star
That lights towards hell his bond-
slaves and their Czar.

TO LOUIS KOSSUTH.

LIGHT of our fathers' eyes, and in our own
 Star of the unsetting sunset! for thy name,
 That on the front of noon was as a flame
 In the great year nigh thirty years ago
 When all the heavens of Europe shook and shone
 With stormy wind and lightning, keeps its fame
 And bears its witness all day through the same.
 Not for past days and great deeds past alone,
 Kossuth, we praise thee as our Landor praised;
 But that now too we know thy voice upraised,—
 Thy voice, the trumpet of the truth of God,
 Thine hand, the thunder-bearer's, raised to smite
 As with heaven's lightning for a sword and rod
 Men's heads abased before the Muscovite.

THE PILGRIMS.

WHO is your lady of love, O ye that pass
 Singing? and is it for sorrow of that which was
 That ye sing sadly, or dream of what shall be?
 For gladly at once and sadly it seems ye sing.
 — Our lady of love by you is un-
 beholden;
 For hands she hath none, nor eyes, nor lips,
 nor golden
 Treasure of hair, nor face nor form.
 But we
 That love, we know her more fair than any thing.
 — Is she a queen, having great gifts to give?
 — Yea, these: that whoso hath seen her shall not live

Except he serve her sorrowing, with strange pain,
 Travail and bloodshedding and bitterer tears;
 And when she bids die he shall surely die.
 And he shall leave all things under the sky,
 And go forth naked under sun and rain,
 And work and wait and watch out all his years.
 — Hath she on earth no place of habitation?
 — Age to age calling, nation answering nation,
 Cries out, Where is she? and there is none to say;
 For if she be not in the spirit of men,
 For if in the inward soul she hath no place,
 In vain they cry unto her, seeking her face,
 In vain their mouths make much of her; for they
 Cry with vain tongues, till the heart lives again.
 — O ye that follow, and have ye no repentance?
 For on your brows is written a mortal sentence,
 An hieroglyph of sorrow, a fiery sign,
 That in your lives ye shall not pause or rest,
 Nor have the sure sweet common love, nor keep
 Friends and safe days, nor joy of life nor sleep.
 — These have we not, who have one thing, the divine
 Face and clear eyes of faith and fruitful breast.
 — And ye shall die before your thrones be won.
 — Yea, and the changed world and the liberal sun
 Shall move and shine without us, and we lie
 Dead; but if she too move on earth, and live,

- But if the old world with all the old
irons rent
Laugh and give thanks, shall we be
not content?
Nay, we shall rather live, we shall
not die,
Life being so little, and death so
good to give.
- And these men shall forget you. —
Yea, but we
Shall be a part of the earth and the
ancient sea,
And heaven-high air august, and
awful fire,
And all things good; and no man's
heart shall beat
But somewhat in it of our blood once
shed
Shall quiver and quicken, as now in us
the dead
Blood of men slain and the old same
life's desire
Plants in their fiery footprints our
fresh feet.
- But ye that might be clothed with
all things pleasant,
Ye are foolish that put off the fair soft
present,
That clothe yourselves with the cold
future air;
When mother and father and tender
sister and brother
And the old live love that was shall be
as ye,
Dust, and no fruit of loving life shall
be.
— She shall be yet who is more than
all these were,
Than sister or wife or father unto
us or mother.
- Is this worth life, is this, to win for
wages?
Lo, the dead mouths of the awful gray-
grown ages,
The venerable, in the past that is
their prison,
In the outer darkness, in the un-
opening grave,
Laugh, knowing how many as ye now
say have said,
- How many, and all are fallen, are fallen
and dead:
Shall ye dead rise, and these dead
have not risen?
— Not we but she, who is tender,
and swift to save.
- Are ye not weary and faint not by
the way,
Seeing night by night devoured of day
by day,
Seeing hour by hour consumed in
sleepless fire?
Sleepless; and ye too, when shall
ye too sleep?
— We are weary in heart and head, in
hands and feet,
And surely more than all things sleep
were sweet, —
Than all things save the inexorable
desire
Which whoso knoweth shall nei-
ther faint nor weep.
- Is this so sweet that one were fain
to follow?
Is this so sure where all men's hopes
are hollow,
Even this your dream, that by much
tribulation
Ye shall make whole flawed hearts,
and bowed necks straight?
— Nay, though our life were blind, our
death were fruitless,
Not therefore were the whole world's
high hope rootless;
But man to man, nation would turn
to nation,
And the old life live, and the old
great word be great.
- Pass on, then, and pass by us, and
let us be,
For what light think ye after life to
see?
And if the world fare better will ye
know?
And if man triumph who shall
seek you and say?
— Enough of light is this for one life's
span,
That all men born are mortal, but not
man;

And we men bring death lives by
 night to sow,
 That man may reap and eat and
 live by day.

THE LITANY OF NATIONS.

μᾶ Γᾶ, μᾶ Γᾶ, βοᾶν
 φοβερόν ἀπότρειε.

Æsch. *Supp.* 890.

CHORUS.

IF with voice of words or prayers thy
 sons may reach thee,
 We thy latter sons, the men thine
 after-birth,
 We the children of thy gray-grown
 age, O Earth,
 O our mother everlasting, we beseech
 thee,
 By the sealed and secret ages of thy
 life;
 By the darkness wherein grew thy
 sacred forces;
 By the songs of stars thy sisters in
 their courses;
 By thine own song hoarse and hollow
 and shrill with strife;
 By thy voice distuned and marred of
 modulation;
 By the discord of thy measure's
 march with theirs;
 By the beauties of thy bosom, and
 the cares;
 By thy glory of growth, and splendor
 of thy station;
 By the shame of men thy children, and
 the pride;
 By the pale-cheeked hope that sleeps
 and weeps and passes,
 As the gray dew from the morning
 mountain grasses;
 By the white-lipped sightless memories
 that abide;
 By the silence and the sound of many
 sorrows;
 By the joys that leapt up living and
 fell dead;
 By the veil that hides thy hands and
 breasts and head,
 Wrought of divers-colored days and
 nights and morrows;

Isis, thou that knowest of God what
 worlds are worth,
 Thou the ghost of God, the mother
 uncreated,
 Soul for whom the floating forceless
 ages waited
 As our forceless fancies wait on thee,
 O Earth;
 Thou the body and soul, the father-god
 and mother,
 If at all it move thee, knowing of all
 things done
 Here where evil things and good
 things are not one,
 But their faces are as fire against each
 other;
 By thy morning and thine evening, night
 and day;
 By the first white light that stirs and
 strives and hovers
 As a bird above the brood her bosom
 covers,
 By the sweet last star that takes the
 westward way;
 By the night whose feet are shod with
 snow or thunder,
 Fledged with plumes of storm, or
 soundless as the dew;
 By the vesture bound of many-folded
 blue
 Round her breathless breasts, and all
 the woven wonder;
 By the golden-growing eastern stream
 of sea;
 By the sounds of sunrise moving in
 the mountains;
 By the forces of the floods and un-
 sealed fountains;
 Thou that badest man be born, bid
 man be free.

GREECE.

I am she that made thee lovely with my
 beauty
 From north to south:
 Mine, the fairest lips, took first the fire
 of duty
 From thine own mouth.
 Mine, the fairest eyes, sought first thy
 laws, and knew them
 Truths undefiled;

Mine, the fairest hands, took freedom
 first into them,
 A weanling child.
 By my light, now he lies sleeping, seen
 above him
 Where none sees other ;
 By my dead that loved, and living men
 that love him, —
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother !

ITALY.

I am she that was the light of thee
 enkindled
 When Greece grew dim ;
 She whose life grew up with man's free
 life, and dwindled
 With wane of him ;
 She that once by sword and once by
 word imperial
 Struck bright thy gloom ;
 And a third time, casting off these years
 funereal,
 Shall burst thy tomb.
 By that bond 'twixt thee and me where-
 at affrighted
 Thy tyrants fear us ;
 By that hope and this remembrance re-
 united, —
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us !

SPAIN.

I am she that set thy seal upon the
 nameless
 West worlds of seas ;
 And my sons as brides took unto them
 the tameless
 Hesperides ;
 Till my sins and sons through sinless
 lands dispers'd,
 With red flame shod,
 Made accurst the name of man, and
 thrice accurs'd
 The name of God.
 Lest for those past fires the fires of my
 repentance
 Hell's fume yet smother,
 Now my blood would buy remission of
 my sentence, —
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother !

FRANCE.

I am she that was thy sign and standard-
 bearer,
 Thy voice and cry ;
 She that washed thee with her blood,
 and left thee fairer,
 The same was I.
 Were not these the hands that raised
 thee fallen, and fed thee,
 These hands defiled ?
 Was not I thy tongue that spake, thine
 eye that led thee, —
 Not I thy child ?
 By the darkness on our dreams, and the
 dead errors
 Of dead times near us ;
 By the hopes that hang around thee,
 and the terrors, —
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us !

RUSSIA.

I am she whose hands are strong, and
 her eyes blinded,
 And lips athirst,
 Till upon the night of nations many-
 minded
 One bright day burst ;
 Till the myriad stars be molten into
 one light,
 And that light thine ;
 Till the soul of man be parcel of the
 sunlight,
 And thine of mine.
 By the snows that blanch not him, nor
 cleanse from slaughter,
 Who slays his brother ;
 By the stains and by the chains on me
 thy daughter, —
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother !

SWITZERLAND.

I am she that shows on mighty limbs
 and maiden
 Nor chain nor stain ;
 For what blood can touch these hands
 with gold unladen,
 These feet what chain ?
 By the surf of spears one shieldless
 bosom breasted,
 And was my shield,

Till the plume-plucked Austrian vulture-heads twin-crested
 Twice drenched the field.
 By the snows and souls untrampled
 and untroubled
 That shine to cheer us,
 Light of those to these responsive and
 redoubled, —
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

GERMANY.

I am she beside whose forest-hidden
 fountains
 Slept freedom armed;
 By the magic born to music in my
 mountains,
 Heart-chained and charmed.
 By those days, the very dream whereof
 delivers
 My soul from wrong;
 By the sounds that make of all my ring-
 ing rivers
 None knows what song;
 By the many tribes and names of my
 division
 One from another;
 By the single eye of sun-compelling
 vision, —
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

ENGLAND.

I am she that was and was not of thy
 chosen,
 Free, and not free;
 She that fed thy springs, till now her
 springs are frozen;
 Yet I am she.
 By the sea that clothed and sun that
 saw me splendid
 And fame that crowned,
 By the song-fires and the sword-fires
 mixed and blended
 That robed me round;
 By the star that Milton's soul for Shel-
 ley's lighted,
 Whose rays insphere us;
 By the beacon-bright Republic far-off
 sighted, —
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

CHORUS.

Turn away from us the cross-blown
 blasts of error,
 That drown each other;
 Turn away the fearful cry, the loud-
 tongued terror,
 O Earth, O mother!
 Turn away their eyes who track, their
 hearts who follow,
 The pathless past;
 Show the soul of man, as summer shows
 the swallow,
 The way at last.
 By the sloth of men that all too long
 endure men
 On man to tread;
 By the cry of men, the bitter cry of
 poor men
 That faint for bread;
 By the blood-sweat of the people in the
 garden
 Inwalled of kings;
 By his passion interceding for their par-
 don
 Who do these things;
 By the sightless souls and fleshless
 limbs that labor
 For not their fruit;
 By the foodless mouth with foodless
 heart for neighbor,
 That, mad, is mute;
 By the child that famine eats as worms
 the blossom —
 Ah God, the child! —
 By the milkless lips that strain the
 bloodless bosom
 Till woe runs wild;
 By the pastures that give grass to feed
 the lamb in,
 Where men lack meat;
 By the cities clad with gold and shame
 and famine;
 By field and street;
 By the people, by the poor man, by the
 master
 That men call slave;
 By the cross-winds of defeat and of
 disaster,
 By wreck, by wave;
 By the helm that keeps us still to sun-
 wards driving,
 Still eastward bound,

Till, as night-watch ends, day burn on
 eyes reviving,
 And land be found :
 We thy children, that arraign not nor
 impeach thee
 Though no star steer us,
 By the waves that wash the morning
 we beseech thee,
 O mother, hear us !

CHRISTMAS ANTIPHONES.

I.

IN CHURCH.

THOU whose birth on earth
 Angels sang to men,
 While thy stars made mirth,
 Saviour, at thy birth,
 This day born again ;

As this night was bright
 With thy cradle-ray,
 Very light of light,
 Turn the wild world's night
 To thy perfect day.

God whose feet made sweet
 Those wild ways they trod,
 From thy fragrant feet
 Staining field and street
 With the blood of God ;

God whose breast is rest
 In the time of strife,
 In thy secret breast
 Sheltering souls opprest
 From the heat of life ;

God whose eyes are skies
 Love-lit as with spheres
 By the lights that rise
 To thy watching eyes,
 Orb'd lights of tears ;

God whose heart hath part
 In all grief that is,
 Was not man's the dart
 That went through thine heart,
 And the wound not his ?

Where the pale souls wall,
 Held in bonds of death,
 Where all spirits quail,
 Came thy Godhead pale
 Still from human breath, —

Pale from life and strife,
 Wan with manhood, came
 Forth of mortal life,
 Pierced as with a knife,
 Scarred as with a flame.

Thou the Word and Lord
 In all time and space
 Heard, beheld, adored,
 With all ages poured
 Forth before thy face, —

Lord, what worth in earth
 Drew thee down to die ?
 What therein was worth,
 Lord, thy death and birth ?
 What beneath thy sky ?

Light above all love
 By thy love was lit,
 And brought down the Dove
 Feathered from above
 With the wings of it.

From the height of night,
 Was not thine the star
 That led forth with might
 By no worldly light
 Wise men from afar ?

Yet the wise men's eyes
 Saw thee not more clear
 Than they saw thee rise
 Who in shepherds' guise
 Drew as poor men near.

Yet thy poor endure,
 And are with us yet ;
 Be thy name a sure
 Refuge for thy poor
 Whom men's eyes forget.

Thou whose ways we praise,
 Clear alike and dark,
 Keep our works and ways
 This and all thy days
 Safe inside thine ark.

Who shall keep thy sheep,
 Lord, and lose not one?
 Who save one shall keep,
 Lest the shepherds sleep?
 Who beside the Son?

From the grave-deep wave,
 From the sword and flame,
 Thou, even thou, shalt save
 Souls of king and slave
 Only by thy Name.

Light not born with morn
 Or her fires above,
 Jesus virgin-born,
 Held of men in scorn,
 Turn their scorn to love.

Thou whose face gives grace
 As the sun's doth heat,
 Let thy sun-bright face
 Lighten time and space
 Here beneath thy feet.

Bid our peace increase,
 Thou that madest morn;
 Bid oppressions cease;
 Bid the night be peace;
 Bid the day be born.

II.

OUTSIDE CHURCH.

We whose days and ways
 All the night makes dark, —
 What day shall we praise
 Of these weary days
 That our life-drops mark?

We whose mind is blind,
 Fed with hope of naught;
 Wastes of worn mankind,
 Without heart or mind,
 Without meat or thought;

We with strife of life
 Worn till all life cease,
 Want, a whetted knife,
 Sharpening strife on strife,
 How should we love peace?

Ye whose meat is sweet
 And your wine-cup red,
 Us beneath your feet
 Hunger grinds as wheat, —
 Grinds to make you bread.

Ye whose night is bright
 With soft rest and heat,
 Clothed like day with light,
 Us the naked night
 Slays from street to street.

Hath your God no rod,
 That ye tread so light?
 Man on us as God,
 God as man hath trod, —
 Trod us down with might.

We that one by one
 Bleed from either's rod,
 What for us hath done
 Man beneath the sun,
 What for us hath God?

We whose blood is food
 Given your wealth to feed,
 From the Christless rood
 Red with no God's blood,
 But with man's indeed;

How shall we that see
 Night-long overhead
 Life, the flowerless tree,
 Nailed whereon as we
 Were our fathers dead, —

We whose ear can hear,
 Not whose tongue can name,
 Famine, ignorance, fear,
 Bleeding tear by tear
 Year by year of shame, —

Till the dry life die
 Out of bloodless breast,
 Out of beamless eye,
 Out of mouths that cry
 Till death feed with rest, —

How shall we as ye,
 Though ye bid us, pray?
 Though ye call, can we
 Hear you call, or see,
 Though ye show us day?

We whose name is shame,
 We whose souls walk bare,
 Shall we call the same
 God as ye by name,
 Teach our lips your prayer? —

God, forgive and give,
 For His sake who died? —
 Nay, for ours who live,
 How shall we forgive
 Thee, then, on our side?

We whose right to light
 Heaven's high noon denies,
 Whom the blind beams smite
 That for you shine bright,
 And but burn our eyes, —

With what dreams of beams
 Shall we build up day,
 At what sourceless streams
 Seek to drink in dreams
 Ere they pass away?

In what street shall meet,
 At what market-place,
 Your feet and our feet,
 With one goal to greet,
 Having run one race?

What one hope shall ope
 For us all as one
 One same horoscope,
 Where the soul sees hope
 That outburns the sun?

At what shrine what wine,
 At what board what bread,
 Salt as blood or brine,
 Shall we share in sign
 How we poor were fed?

In what hour what power
 Shall we pray for morn,
 If your perfect hour,
 When all day bears flower,
 Not for us is born?

III.

BEYOND CHURCH.

Ye that weep in sleep,
 Souls and bodies bound,
 Ye that all night keep
 Watch for change, and weep
 That no change is found;

Ye that cry and die,
 And the world goes on
 Without ear or eye,
 And the days go by
 Till all days are gone :

Man shall do for you,
 Men the sons of man,
 What no god would do
 That they sought unto
 While the blind years ran.

Brotherhood of good,
 Equal laws and rights,
 Freedom, whose sweet food
 Feeds the multitude
 All their days and nights

With the bread full-fed
 Of her body blest
 And the soul's wine shed
 From her table spread
 Where the world is guest, —

Mingling me and thee,
 When like light of eyes
 Flashed through thee and me
 Truth shall make us free,
 Liberty make wise :

These are they whom day
 Follows and gives light
 Whence they see to slay
 Night, and burn away
 All the seed of night.

What of thine and mine,
 What of want and wealth,
 When one faith is wine
 For my heart and thine,
 And one draught is health?

For no sect elect
Is the soul's wine poured,
And her table decked :
Whom should man reject
From man's common board ?

Gods refuse and choose,
Grudge and sell and spare :
None shall man refuse,
None of all men lose,
None leave out of care.

No man's might of sight
Knows that hour before ;
No man's hand hath might
To put back that light
For one hour the more.

Not though all men call,
Kneeling with void hands,
Shall they see light fall
Till it come for all
Tribes of men and lands.

No desire brings fire
Down from heaven by prayer,
Though man's vain desire
Hang faith's wind-struck lyre
Out in tuneless air.

One hath breath, and saith
What the tune shall be, —
Time, who puts his breath
Into life and death,
Into earth and sea.

To and fro years flow,
Fill their tides and ebb,
As his fingers go
Weaving to and fro
One unfinished web.

All the range of change
Hath its bounds therein,
All the lives that range
All the byways strange
Named of death or sin.

Star from far to star
Speaks, and white moons wake,
Watchful from afar
What the night's ways are
For the morning's sake.

Many names and flames
Pass and flash and fall,
Night-begotten names,
And the night reclaims,
As she bare them, all.

But the sun is one,
And the sun's name Right ;
And when light is none
Saving of the sun,
All men shall have light

All shall see and be
Parcel of the morn :
Ay, though blind were we,
None shall choose but see
When that day is born.

MATER DOLOROSA.

Citoyen, lui dit Enjolras, ma mère, c'est la République. — Les Misérables.

WHO is it that sits by the way, by the
wild wayside,
In a rent stained raiment, the robe of a
cast-off bride,
In the dust, in the rainfall sitting, with
soiled feet bare,
With the night for a garment upon her,
with torn wet hair ?
She is fairer of face than the daughters
of men, and her eyes,
Worn through with her tears, are deep
as the depth of skies.

This is she for whose sake being fallen,
for whose abject sake,
Earth groans in the blackness of dark-
ness, and men's hearts break.
This is she for whose love, having seen
her, the men that were
Poured life out as water, and shed their
souls upon air.
This is she for whose glory their years
were counted as foam ;
Whose face was a light upon Greece,
was a fire upon Rome.

Is it now not surely a vain thing, a fool-
ish and vain,
To sit down by her, mourn to her, serve
her, partake in the pain ?

She is gray with the dust of time on
his manifold ways,
Where her faint feet stumble and falter
through yearlong days.
Shall she help us at all, O fools, give
fruit or give fame,
Who herself is a name despised, a
rejected name?

We have not served her for guerdon.
If any do so,
That his mouth may be sweet with such
honey, we care not to know.
We have drunk from a wine-sweet-
ened, a perilous cup,
A draught very bitter. The kings of
the earth stood up,
And the rulers took counsel together,
to smite her and slay;
And the blood of her wounds is given
us to drink to-day.

Can these bones live? or the leaves
that are dead leaves bud?
Or the dead blood drawn from her
veins be in your veins blood?
Will ye gather up water again that was
drawn and shed?
In the blood is the life of the veins, and
her veins are dead.
For the lives that are over are over, and
past things past;
She had her day, and it is not; was first,
and is last.

Is it nothing unto you, then, all ye that
pass by,
If her breath be left in her lips, if she
live now or die?
Behold now, O people, and say if she
be not fair,
Whom your fathers followed to find
her, with praise and prayer,
And rejoiced, having found her, though
roof they had none, nor bread.
But ye care not: what is it to you if
her day be dead?

It was well with our fathers; their
sound was in all men's lands;
There was fire in their hearts, and the
hunger of fight in their hands.

Naked and strong they went forth in
her strength like flame,
For her love's and her name's sake of
old, her republican name.
But their children, by kings made quiet,
by priests made wise,
Love better the heat of their hearths
than the light of her eyes.

Are they children of these thy children
indeed, who have sold,
O golden goddess, the light of thy face
for gold?
Are they sons indeed of the sons of thy
dayspring of hope,
Whose lives are in fief of an emperor,
whose souls of a Pope?
Hide then thine head, O beloved! thy
time is done;
Thy kingdom is broken in heaven, and
blind thy sun.

What sleep is upon you, to dream she
indeed shall rise,
When the hopes are dead in her heart
as the tears in her eyes?
If ye sing of her dead, will she stir? if
ye weep for her, weep?
Come away now, leave her: what hath
she to do but sleep?
But ye that mourn are alive, and have
years to be;
And life is good, and the world is wiser
than we.

Yea, wise is the world and mighty, with
years to give,
And years to promise; but how long
now shall it live?
And foolish and poor is faith, and her
ways are bare,
Till she find the way of the sun, and the
morning air.
In that hour shall this dead face shine
as the face of the sun,
And the soul of man and her soul and
the world's be one.

MATER TRIUMPHALIS.

<p>MOTHER of man's time-travelling generations, Breath of his nostrils, heart-blood of his heart, God above all gods, worshipped of all nations, Light above light, law beyond law, thou art.</p>	<p>Not knowing of thee, thy face not knowing, O mother, O light wherethrough the darkness is as light.</p>
<p>Thy face is as a sword, smiting in sunder Shadows and chains, and dreams and iron things; The sea is dumb before thy face, the thunder Silent, the skies are narrower than thy wings.</p>	<p>Men that forsook thee hast thou not forsaken, Races of men that knew not hast thou known; Nations that slept thou hast doubted not to waken, Worshippers of strange gods to make thine own.</p>
<p>Angels and gods, spirit and sense, thou takest In thy right hand as drops of dust or dew; The temples and the towers of time thou breakest, His thoughts and words and works, to make them new.</p>	<p>All old gray histories hiding thy clear features, O secret spirit and sovereign, all men's tales, Creeds woven of men, thy children and thy creatures, They have woven for vestures of thee and for veils.</p>
<p>All we have wandered from thy ways, have hidden Eyes from thy glory and ears from calls they heard; Called of thy trumpets vainly, called and chidden, Scourged of thy speech, and wounded of thy word.</p>	<p>Thine hands, without election or exemption, Feed all men fainting from false peace or strife, O thou, the resurrection and redemption, The godhead and the manhood and the life.</p>
<p>We have known thee, and have not known thee; stood beside thee, Felt thy lips breathe, set foot where thy feet trod, Loved and renounced, and worshipped and denied thee, As though thou wert but as another god.</p>	<p>Thy wings shadow the waters; thine eyes lighten The horror of the hollows of the night; The depths of the earth and the dark places brighten Under thy feet, whiter than fire is white.</p>
<p>"One hour for sleep," we said, "and yet one other; All day we served her, and who shall serve by night?"</p>	<p>Death is subdued to thee, and hell's bands broken; Where thou art only is heaven: who hears not thee, Time shall not hear him; when men's names are spoken, A nameless sign of death shall his name be.</p>

<p>Deathless shall be the death, the name be nameless; Sterile of stars his twilight time of breath; With fire of hell shall shame consume him shameless, And dying, all the night darken his death.</p>	<p>And the world naked as a new-born maiden Stands virginal and splendid as at birth, With all thine heaven of all its light unladen, Of all its love unburdened all thine earth.</p>
<p>The years are as thy garments, the world's ages As sandals bound and loosed from thy swift feet; Time serves before thee, as one that hath for wages Praise or shame only, bitter words or sweet.</p>	<p>For the utter earth and the utter air of heaven, And the extreme depth is thine, and the extreme height; Shadows of things and veils of ages riven Are as men's kings unkingdomed in thy sight.</p>
<p>Thou sayest "Well done," and all a century kindles; Again, thou sayest, "Depart from sight of me," And all the light of face of all men dwindles, And the age is as the broken glass of thee.</p>	<p>Through the iron years, the centuries brazen-gated, By the ages' barred, impenetrable doors, From the evening to the morning have we waited, Should thy foot haply sound on the awful floors.</p>
<p>The night is as a seal set on men's faces, On faces fallen of men that take no light, Nor give light in the deeps of the dark places, Blind things, incorporate with the body of night.</p>	<p>The floors untrodden of the sun's feet glimmer, The star-unstricken pavements of the night; Do the lights burn inside? the lights wax dimmer On festal faces withering out of sight.</p>
<p>Their souls are serpents winter-bound and frozen, Their shame is as a tame beast, at their feet Couched; their cold lips deride thee and thy chosen, Their lying lips made gray with dust for meat.</p>	<p>The crowned heads lose the light on them; it may be Dawn is at hand to smite the loud feast dumb; To bind the torch-lit centuries till the day be, The feasting kingdoms till thy king- dome come.</p>
<p>Then when their time is full and days run over, The splendor of thy sudden brow made bare Darkens the morning; thy bared hands uncover The veils of light and night and the awful air.</p>	<p>Shall it not come? deny they or dis- semble, Is it not even as lightning from on high Now? and though many a soul close eyes, and tremble, How should they tremble at all who love thee as I?</p>

- I am thine harp between thine hands,
O mother !
All my strong chords are strained
with love of thee.
We grapple in love and wrestle, as each
with other
Wrestle the wind and the unreluctant
sea.
- I am no courtier of thee sober-suited,
Who loves a little for a little pay.
Me not thy winds and storms, nor
thrones disrooted,
Nor molten crowns, nor thine own
sins, dismay.
- Sinned hast thou sometime, therefore
art thou sinless ;
Stained hast thou been, who art
therefore without stain ;
Even as man's soul is kin to thee, but
kinless
Thou, in whose womb Time sows the
all-various grain.
- I do not bid thee spare me, O dreadful
mother !
I pray thee that thou spare not, of
thy grace.
How were it with me then, if ever
another
Should come to stand before thee in
this my place ?
- I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy
clarion,
Full of thy cry, sonorous with thy
breath ;
The graves of souls born worms, and
creeds grown carrion
Thy blast of judgment fills with fires
of death.
- Thou art the player whose organ-keys
are thunders,
And I, beneath thy foot, the pedal
prest ;
Thou art the ray whereat the rent night
sunders,
And I the cloudlet borne upon thy
breast.
- I shall burn up before thee, pass and
perish,
As haze in sunrise on the red sea-
line ;
But thou from dawn to sunsett shalt
cherish
The thoughts that led and souls that
lighted mine.
- Reared between night and noon and
truth and error,
Each twilight-travelling bird that
trills and screams
Sickens at midday, nor can face for
terror
The imperious heaven's inevitable
extremes.
- I have no spirit of skill with equal
fingers
At sign to sharpen or to slacken
strings ;
I keep no time of song with gold-
perched singers
And chirp of linnets on the wrists of
kings.
- I am thy storm-thrush of the days that
darken,
Thy petrel in the foam that bears thy
bark
To port through night and tempest : if
thou hearken,
My voice is in thy heaven before the
lark.
- My song is in the mist that hides thy
morning,
My cry is up before the day for
thee ;
I have heard thee and beheld thee and
give warning,
Before thy wheels divide the sky and
sea.
- Birds shall wake with thee voiced and
feathered fairer,
To see in summer what I see in
spring :
I have eyes and heart to endure thee,
O thunder-bearer,
And they shall be who shall have
tongues to sing.

I have love at least, and have not fear,
and part not
From thine unnavigable and wingless
way;
Thou tarriest, and I have not said thou
art not,
Nor all thy night long have denied
thy day.

Darkness to daylight shall lift up thy
pæan,
Hill to hill thunder, vale cry back to
vale,
With wind-notes as of eagles Æschy-
lean,
And Sappho singing in the nightin-
gale.

Sung to by mighty sons of dawn and
daughters,
Of this night's songs thine ear shall
keep but one, —
That supreme song which shook the
channelled waters,
And called thee skyward as God calls
the sun.

Come, though all heaven again be fire
above thee;
Though death before thee come to
clear thy sky;
Let us but see in his thy face who love
thee;
Yea, though thou slay us, arise, and
let us die.

SIENA.

INSIDE this northern summer's fold
The fields are full of naked gold,
Broadcast from heaven on lands it
loves;
The green veiled air is full of doves;
Soft leaves that sift the sunbeams let
Light on the small warm grasses wet
Fall in short broken kisses sweet,
And break again like waves that beat
Round the sun's feet.

But I, for all this English mirth
Of golden-shod and dancing days,

And the old green-girt sweet-hearted
earth,
Desire what here no spells can raise.
Far hence, with holier heavens above,
The lovely city of my love
Bathes deep in the sun-satiated air
That flows round no fair thing more
fair,
Her beauty bare.

There the utter sky is holier, there
More pure the intense white height of
air,
More clear men's eyes that mine would
meet,
And the sweet springs of things more
sweet.
There, for this one warm note of doves
A clamor of a thousand loves
Storms the night's ear, the day's assails,
From the tempestuous nightingales,
And fills, and fails.

O gracious city well-beloved!
Italian, and a maiden crowned,
Siena, my feet are no more moved
Toward thy strange-shapen moun-
tain-bound;
But my heart in me turns and moves,
O lady loveliest of my loves,
Toward thee, to lie before thy feet,
And gaze from thy fair fountain-seat
Up the sheer street;

And the house midway hanging see
That saw Saint Catherine bodily,
Felt on its floors her sweet feet move,
And the live light of fiery love
Burn from her beautiful strange face,
As in the sanguine sacred place
Where in pure hands she took the head
Severed, and with pure lips still red
Kissed the lips dead.

For years through, sweetest of the
saints,
In quiet without cease she wrought,
Till cries of men and fierce complaints
From outward moved her maiden
thought;
And prayers she heard and sighs toward
France, —
"God, send us back deliverance,

Send back thy servant, lest we die !"
With an exceeding bitter cry
They smote the sky.

Then in her sacred saving hands
She took the sorrows of the lands,
With maiden palms she lifted up
The sick time's blood-imbittered cup,
And in her virgin garment furled
The faint limbs of a wounded world.
Clothed with calm love and clear desire,
She went forth in her soul's attire,
A missive fire.

Across the might of men that strove
It shone, and over heads of kings;
And molten in red flames of love
Were swords and many monstrous
things;
And shields were lowered, and snapt
were spears,
And sweeter-tuned the clamorous years;
And faith came back, and peace, that
were
Fled; for she bade, saying, "Thou,
God's heir,
Hast thou no care ?

" Lo, men lay waste thine heritage
Still, and much heathen people rage
Against thee, and devise vain things.
What comfort in the face of kings,
What counsel is there? Turn thine
eyes
And thine heart from them in like wise;
Turn thee unto thine holy place
To help us that of God for grace
Require thy face.

" For who shall hear us if not thou
In a strange land? what doest thou
there?
Thy sheep are spoiled, and the plough-
ers plough
Upon us: why hast thou no care
For all this, and beyond strange hills
Liest unregardful what snow chills
Thy foldless flock, or what rains beat?
Lo, in thine ears, before thy feet,
Thy lost sheep bleat.

" And strange men feed on faultless
lives,
And there is blood, and men put knives,
Shepherd, unto the young lamb's throat;
And one hath eaten, and one smote,
And one had hunger and is fed
Full of the flesh of these, and red
With blood of these as who drink-
wine.
And God knoweth, who hath sent thee
a sign,
If these were thine."

But the Pope's heart within him burned,
So that he rose up, seeing the sign
And came among them; but she turned
Back to her daily way divine,
And fed her faith with silent things,
And lived her life with curbed white
wings,
And mixed herself with heaven, and
died;
And now on the sheer city-side
Smiles like a bride.

You see her in the fresh clear gloom,
Where walls shut out the flame and
bloom
Of full-breathed summer, and the roof
Keeps the keen ardent air aloof
And sweet weight of the violent sky:
There bodily beheld on high,
She seems as one hearing in tune
Heaven within heaven, at heaven's full
noon,
In sacred swoon, —

A solemn swoon of sense that aches
With imminent blind heat of heaven,
While all the wide-eyed spirit wakes,
Vigilant of the supreme Seven,
Whose choral flames in God's sight
move,
Made unendurable with love,
That without wind or blast of breath
Compels all things, through life and
death,
Whither God saith.

There on the dim side-chapel wall
Thy mighty touch memorial,
Razzi, raised up, for ages dead,
And fixed for us her heavenly head;

And, rent with plaited thorn and rod,
Bared the live likeness of her God
To men's eyes turning from strange
lands,
Where, pale from thine immortal hands,
Christ wounded stands;

And the blood blots his holy hair
And white brows over hungering eyes
That plead against us, and the fair
Mute lips forlorn of words or sighs
In the great torment that bends down
His bruised head with the bloomless
crown,
White as the unfruitful thorn-flower, —
A God beheld in dreams that were
Beheld of her.

In vain on all these sins and years
Falls the sad blood, fall the slow tears, —
In vain poured forth as water-springs,
Priests, on your altars, and ye, kings,
About your seats of sanguine gold:
Still your God, spat upon and sold,
Bleeds at your hands; but now is gone
All his flock from him saving one, —
Judah alone.

Surely your race it was that he,
O men signed backward with his
name!
Beholding in Gethsemane,
Bled the red bitter sweat of shame,
Knowing how the word of Christian
should
Mean to men evil and not good,
Seem to men shameful for your sake,
Whose lips, for all the prayers they
make,
Man's blood must slake.

But blood nor tears ye love not, you
That my love leads my longing to,
Fair as the world's old faith of flowers,
O golden goddesses of ours!
From what Idalian rose-pleasance
Hath Aphrodite bidden glance
The lovelier lightnings of your feet?
From what sweet Paphian sward or
seat
Led you more sweet?

O white three sisters, three as one,
With flower-like arms for flowery
bands,
Your linked limbs glitter like the sun,
And time lies beaten at your hands.
Time and wild years and wars and men
Pass, and ye care not whence or when;
With calm lips over-sweet for scorn,
Ye watch night pass, O children born
Of the old-world morn!

Ah! in this strange and shrineless place,
What doth a goddess, what a Grace,
Where no Greek worships her shrined
limbs
With wreaths and Cytherean hymns?
Where no lute makes luxurious
The adoring airs in Amathus,
Till the maid, knowing her mother near,
Sobs with love, aching with sweet fear?
What do ye here?

For the outer land is sad, and wears
A raiment of a flaming fire;
And the fierce fruitless mountain stairs
Climb, yet seem wroth and loath to
aspire, —
Climb, and break, and are broken down,
And through their clefts and crests the
town
Looks west, and sees the dead sun lie,
In sanguine death that stains the sky
With angry dye.

And from the war-worn wastes without
In twilight, in the time of doubt,
One sound comes of one whisper, where
Moved with low motions of slow air
The great trees nigh the castle swing
In the sad-colored evening:
"Ricorditi di me, che son
La Pia," — that small sweet word alone
Is not yet gone.

"Ricorditi di me," — the sound
Sole out of deep dumb days remote,
Across the fiery and fatal ground
Comes tender as a hurt bird's note
To where, a ghost with empty hands,
A woe-worn ghost, her palace stands
In the mid city, where the strong
Bells turn the sunset air to song,
And the towers throng.

With other face, with speech the same,
A mightier maiden's likeness came
Late among mourning men that slept,
A sacred ghost that went and wept,
White as the passion-wounded Lamb,
Saying, "Ah, remember me, that am
Italia." (From deep sea to sea
Earth heard, earth knew her, that this
was she.)

"*Ricorditi.*"

"Love made me of all things fairest
thing,
And Hate unmade me; this knows
he
Who with God's sacerdotal ring
Enringed mine hand, espousing me."
Yea, in thy myriad-mooded woe,
Yea, Mother, hast thou not said so?
Have not our hearts within us stirred,
O thou most holiest, at thy word?
Have we not heard?

As this dead tragic land that she
Found deadly, such was time to thee;
Years passed thee withering in the red
Maremma, — years that deemed thee
dead,
Ages that sorrowed or that scorned;
And all this while, though all they
mourned,
Thou sawest the end of things unclean,
And the unborn that should see thee a
queen.
Have we not seen?

The weary poet, thy sad son,
Upon thy soil, under thy skies,
Saw all Italian things save one, —
Italia: this thing missed his eyes;
The old mother-might, the breast, the
face,
That reared, that lit the Roman race, —
This not Leopardi saw; but we,
What is it, Mother, that we see, —
What, if not thee?

Look thou from Siena southward home,
Where the priest's pall hangs rent on
Rome,
And through the red rent swaddling-
bands
Toward thine she strains her labouring
hands.

Look thou and listen, and let be
All the dead quick, all the bond free;
In the blind eyes let there be sight;
In the eighteen centuries of the night
Let there be light.

Bow down the beauty of thine head,
Sweet, and with lips of living breath
Kiss thy sons sleeping and thy dead,
That there be no more sleep or
death.
Give us thy light, thy might, thy love,
Whom thy face seen afar above
Drew to thy feet: and when, being free,
Thou hast blest thy children born to
thee,
Bless also me, —

Me, that when others played or slept,
Sat still under thy cross, and wept;
Me, who so early and unaware
Felt fall on bent bared brows and hair
(Thin drops of the overflowing flood!)
The bitter blessing of thy blood,
The sacred shadow of thy pain,
Thine, the true maiden-mother, slain
And raised again;

Me, consecrated, if I might,
To praise thee, or to love at least,
O mother of all men's dear delight,
Thou madest a choral-souled boy-
priest,
Before my lips had leave to sing,
Or my hands hardly strength to cling
About the intolerable tree
Whereto they had nailed my heart and
thee,
And said, "Let be."

For to thee too, the high Fates gave
Grace to be sacrificed and save,
That being arisen, in the equal sun,
God and the People should be one;
By those red roads thy footprints trod,
Man more divine, more human God,
Saviour; that where no light was
known
But darkness, and a daytime flown,
Light should be shown.

Let there be light, O Italy!
 For our feet falter in the night.
 O Jamp of living years to be,
 O light of God, let there be light!
 Fill with a love keener than flame
 Men sealed in spirit with thy name,
 The cities and the Roman skies,
 Where men with other than man's eyes
 Saw thy sun rise.

For theirs thou wast, and thine were
 they,
 Whose names outshine thy very day:
 For they are thine, and theirs thou art,
 Whose blood beats living in man's
 heart,
 Remembering ages fled and dead
 Wherein for thy sake these men bled;
 They that saw Trebia, they that see
 Mentana, they in years to be
 That shall see thee.

For thine are all of us, and ours
 Thou; till the seasons bring to birth
 A perfect people, and all the powers
 Be with them that bear fruit on
 earth:
 Till the inner heart of man be one
 With freedom, and the sovereign sun;
 And Time, in likeness of a guide,
 Lead the Republic as a bride
 Up to God's side.

COR CORDIUM.

O HEART of hearts, the chalice of
 love's fire,
 Hid round with flowers and all the
 bounty of bloom;
 O wonderful and perfect heart, for
 whom
 The lyrist liberty made life a lyre;
 O heavenly heart, at whose most dear
 desire
 Dead Love, living and singing, cleft
 his tomb,
 And with him risen and regent in
 death's room
 All day thy choral pulses rang full
 choir;

O hearts whose beating blood was run-
 ning song,
 O sole thing sweeter than thine own
 songs were,
 Help us for thy free love's sake to
 be free,
 True for thy truth's sake, for thy
 strength's sake strong,
 Till very liberty make clean and fair
 The nursing earth as the sepul-
 chral sea.

TIRESIAS.

PART I.

It is an hour before the hour of dawn.
 Set in mine hand my staff, and leave
 me here
 Outside the hollow house that blind
 men fear,
 More blind than I who live on life
 withdrawn,
 And feel on eyes that see not but
 foresee
 The shadow of death which clothes
 Antigone.

Here lay her living body that here lies
 Dead, if man living know what thing
 is death,
 If life be all made up of blood and
 breath,
 And no sense be save as of ears and
 eyes.
 But heart there is not, tongue there
 is not found,
 To think or sing what verge hath life
 or bound.

In the beginning when the powers that
 made
 The young child man a little loved
 him, seeing
 His joy of life and fair face of his
 being,
 And bland and laughing with the man-
 child played,
 As friends they saw on our divine
 one day,
 King Cadmus take to queen Harmo-
 nia.

- The strength of soul that builds up as
with hands,
Walls spiritual and towers and towns
of thought
Which only fate, not force, can bring
to naught,
Took then to wife the light of all men's
lands,
War's child, and love's, most sweet
and wise and strong.
Order of things and rule and guiding
song.
- It was long since: yea, even the sun
that saw
Remembers hardly what was, nor
how long;
And now the wise heart of the
worldly song
Is perished, and the holy hand of law
Can set no tune on time, nor help
again
The power of thought to build up life
for men.
- Yea, surely are they now transformed
or dead,
And sleep below this world, where
no sun warms,
Or move about it now in formless
forms
Incognizable, and all their lordship
fled;
And where they stood up singing,
crawl and hiss
With fangs that kill behind their lips
that kiss.
- Yet though her marriage-garment, seem-
ing fair,
Was dyed in sin and woven of jeal-
ousy
To turn their seed to poison, time
shall see
The gods re-issue from them, and repair
Their broken stamp of godhead, and
again
Thought and wise love sing words of
law to men.
- I, Tiresias the prophet, seeing in Thebes
Much evil, and the misery of men's
hands
- Who sow with fruitless wheat the
stones and sands,
With fruitful thorns the fallows and
warm glebes,
Bade their hands hold lest worse hap
come to pass,
But which of you had heed of Tiresias ?
- I am as Time's self in mine own wearied mind,
Whom the strong heavy-footed years
have led
From night to night and dead men
unto dead,
And from the blind hope to the mem-
ory blind;
For each man's life is woven, as
Time's life is,
Of blind young hopes and old blind
memories.
- I am a soul outside of death and birth.
I see before me and afterward I see,
O child, O corpse, the live dead face
of thee,
Whose life and death are one thing
upon earth
Where day kills night and night again
kills day
And dies; but where is that Harmonia ?
- O all-beholden light not seen of me !
Air, and warm winds that under the
sun's eye
Stretch your strong wings at morn-
ing; and thou, sky,
Whose hollow circle engirdling earth
and sea
All night the set stars limit, and all
day
The moving sun remeasures; ye,
I say, —
- Ye heights of hills, and thou Dircean
spring
Inviolable, and ye towers that saw
cast down
Seven kings keen-sighted toward your
seven-faced town,
And quenched the red seed of one sight-
less king;

And thou, for death less dreadful than for birth, Whose wild leaves hide the horror of the earth, —	Good things and evil, strengthless yet and dumb, Sit in the clouds with cloudlike hours to come ;
O mountain whereon gods made chase of kings, Cithæon, thou that sawest on Pen- theus dead Fangs of a mother fasten, and wax red, And satiate with a son thy swollen springs, And heardst her cry fright all thine eyries' nests Who gave death suck at sanguine- suckling breasts ;	Ye forces without form and viewless powers That have the keys of all our years in hold, That prophesy too late with tongues of gold, In a strange speech whose words are perished hours, I witness to you what good things ye give As ye to me what evil while I live.
Yea, and a grief more grievous, without name, A curse too grievous for the name of grief, Thou sawest, and heardst the rumor scare belief Even unto death and madness, when the flame Was lit whose ashes dropped about the pyre That of two brethren made one sun- dering fire ;	What should I do to blame you, what to praise, For floral hours and hours funeral ? What should I do to curse or bless at all For winter-woven or summer-colored days ? Curse he that will, and bless you whoso can : I have no common part in you with man.
O bitter nurse, that on thine hard bare knees Rear'dst for his fate the bloody-footed child Whose hands should be more blood- ily defiled And the old blind feet walk wearier ways than these, Whose seed, brought forth in dark- ness unto doom, Should break as fire out of his moth- er's womb ;	I hear a springing water, whose quick sound Makes softer the soft, sunless, patient air, And the wind's hand is laid on my thin hair Light as a lover's, and the grasses round Have odors in them of green bloom and rain, Sweet as the kiss wherewith sleep kisses pain.
I bear you witness as ye bear to me, Time, day, night, sun, stars, life, death, air, sea, earth, And ye that round the human house of birth Watch with veiled heads and weaponed hands, and see	I hear the low sound of the spring of time Still beating as the low live throb of blood, And where its waters gather head and flood I hear change moving on them, and the chime Across them of reverberate wings of hours Sounding, and feel the future air of flowers.

- The wind of change is soft as snow,
and sweet
The sense thereof as roses in the sun,
The faint wind springing with the
springs that run,
The dim sweet smell of flowering hopes,
and heat
Of unbeholden sunrise; yet how long
I know not, till the morning put forth
song.
- I prophesy of life, who live with death;
Of joy, being sad; of sunlight, who
am blind;
Of man, whose ways are alien from
mankind
And his lips are not parted with man's
breath:
I am a word out of the speechless
years,
The tongue of time, that no man
sleeps who hears.
- I stand a shadow across the door of doom
Athwart the lintel of death's house,
and wait;
Nor quick nor dead, nor flexible by
fate,
Nor quite of earth nor wholly of the
tomb;
A voice, a vision, light as fire or air,
Driven between days that shall be
and that were.
- I prophesy, with feet upon a grave,
Of death cast out, and life devouring
death
As flame doth wood and stubble with
a breath;
Of freedom, though all manhood were
one slave;
Of truth, though all the world were
liar; of love,
That time nor hate can raze the wit-
ness of.
- Life that was given for love's sake and
his law's,
Their powers have no more power
on: they divide
Spoils wrung from lust or wrath of
man or pride,
And keen oblivion without pity or pause
- Sets them on fire, and scatters them
on air
Like ashes shaken from a suppliant's
hair.
- But life they lay no hand on; life once
given
No force of theirs hath competence
to take;
Life that was given for some divine
thing's sake;
To mix the bitterness of earth with
heaven,
Light with man's night, and music
with his breath,
Dies not, but makes its living food
of death.
- I have seen this, who live where men
are not,
In the high starless air of fruitful
night,
On that serenest and obscurest height
Where dead and unborn things are one
in thought,
And whence the live unconquerable
springs
Feed full of force the torrents of new
things.
- I have seen this, who saw long since,
being man,
As now I know not if indeed I be,
The fair bare body of Wisdom, good
to see
And evil, whence my light and night
began;
Light on the goal and darkness on the
way,
Light all through night and darkness
all through day.
- Mother, that by that Pegasean spring,
Didst fold round in thine arms thy
blinded son,
Weeping, "O holiest, what thing hast
thou done,
What, to my child? woe's me that see
the thing!
Is this thy love to me-ward, and
hereof
Must I take sample how the gods can
love?"

"O child, thou hast seen indeed, poor
 child of mine,
 The breasts and flanks of Pallas bare
 in sight,
 But never shalt see more the dear
 sun's light;
 (O Helicon, how great a pay is thine
 For some poor antelopes and wild-
 deer dead!
 My child's eyes hast thou taken in
 their stead"—

Mother, thou knewest not what she had
 to give,
 Thy goddess, though then angered,
 for mine eyes;
 Fame and foreknowledge, and to be
 most wise,
 And centuries of high-thoughted life to
 live,
 And in mine hand this guiding staff
 to be
 As eyesight to the feet of men that
 see.

Perchance I shall not die at all, nor
 pass
 The general door and lintel of men
 dead;
 Yet even the very tongue of wisdom
 said
 What grace should come with death to
 Tiresias,
 What special honor that god's hand
 accord
 Who gathers all men's nations as
 their lord.

And sometimes when the secret eye of
 thought
 Is changed with obscurity, and the
 sense
 Aches with long pain of hollow pre-
 science,
 And fiery foresight with fore-suffering
 bought
 Seems even to infect my spirit and
 consume,
 Hunger and thirst come on me for
 the tomb.

I could be fain to drink my death, and
 sleep,
 And no more wrapped about with
 bitter dreams
 Talk with the stars and with the
 winds and streams
 And with the inevitable years, and weep;
 For how should he who communes
 with the years
 Be sometime not a living spring of
 tears?

O child, that guided of thine only will
 Didst set thy maiden foot against the
 gate
 To strike it open ere thine hour of
 fate,
 Antigone, men say not thou didst ill,
 For love's sake and the reverence of
 his awe
 Divinely dying, slain by mortal law;

For love is awful as immortal death.
 And through thee surely hath thy
 brother won
 Rest, out of sight of our world-weary
 sun,
 And in the dead land where ye ghosts
 draw breath
 A royal place and honor; so wast
 thou
 Happy, though earth have hold of
 thee too now.

So hast thou life and name inviolable,
 And joy it may be, sacred and severe,
 Joy secret-souled beyond all hope or
 fear,
 A monumental joy wherein to dwell
 Seclude and silent, a selected state,
 Serene possession of thy proper fate.

Thou art not dead as these are dead
 who live
 Full of blind years, a sorrow-shaken
 kind,
 Nor as these are am I the prophet
 blind;
 They have not life that have not heart
 to give
 Life, nor have eyesight who lack
 heart to see
 When to be not is better than to be.

O ye whom time but bears with for a span,
How long will ye be blind and dead,
how long

Make your own souls part of your
own soul's wrong?

Son of the word of the most high gods,
man,

Why wilt thou make thine hour of
light and breath

Emptier of all but shame than very
death?

Fool, wilt thou live for ever? though
thou care

With all thine heart for life to keep
it fast,

Shall not thine hand forego it at the
last?

Lo, thy sure hour shall take thee by the
hair

Sleeping, or when thou knowest not,
or wouldst fly;

And as men died much mightier, shalt
thou die.

Yea, they are dead, men much more
worth than thou;

The savor of heroic lives that were,
Is it not mixed into thy common air?

The sense of them is shed about thee
now:

Feel not thy brows a wind blowing
from far?

Aches not thy forehead with a future
star?

The light that thou may'st make out of
thy name

Is in the wind of this same hour that
drives,

Blown within reach but once of all
men's lives;

And he that puts forth hand upon the
flame

Shall have it for a garland on his head
To sign him for a king among the
dead.

But these men that the lessening years
behold,

Who sit the most part without flame
or crown,

And brawl and sleep, and wear their
life-days down

With joys and griefs ignobler than of
old,

And care not if the better day shall
be,—

Are these or art thou dead, Antigone?

PART II.

As when one wakes out of a waning
dream,

And sees with instant eyes the naked
thought

Whereof the vision as a web was
wrought,

I saw beneath a heaven of cloud and
gleam,

Ere yet the heart of the young sun
waxed brave,

One like a prophet standing by a
grave.

In the hoar heaven was hardly beam or
breath,

And all the colored hills and fields
were gray,

And the wind wandered seeking for
the day,

And wailed as though he had found her
done to death,

And this gray hour had built to bury
her

The hollow twilight for a sepulchre.

But in my soul I saw as in a glass

A pale and living body full of grace
There lying, and over it the prophet's
face

Fixed; and the face was not of Tiresias,
For such a starry fire was in his eyes

As though their light it was that made
the skies.

Such eyes should God's have been when
very love

Looked forth of them and set the sun
afame,

And such his lips that called the light
by name

And bade the morning forth at sound
thereof;

His face was sad and masterful as fate, And like a star's his look compas- sionate.	And yelled as beasts of ravin, and their meat Was the rent flesh of their own sons to eat .
Like a star's gazed on of sad eyes so long It seems to yearn with pity, and all its fire As a man's heart to tremble with desire And heave as though the light would bring forth song; Yet from his face flashed lightning on the land, And like the thunder-bearer's was his hand.	And fiery shadows passing with strange cries, And sphinx-like shapes about the ruined lands, And the red reek of parricidal hands And intermixture of incestuous eyes, And light as of that self-divided flame Which made an end of the Cadmean name.
The steepness of strange stairs had tired his feet, And his lips yet seemed sick of that salt bread Wherewith the lips of banishment are fed; But nothing was there in the world so sweet As the most bitter love, like God's own grace, Wherewith he gazed on that fair buried face.	And I beheld again, and lo the grave, And the bright body laid therein as dead, And the same shadow across another head That bowed down silent on that sleep- ing slave Who was the lady of empire from her birth And light of all the kingdoms of the earth.
Grief and glad pride and passion and sharp shame, Wrath and remembrance, faith and hope and hate, And pitiless pity of days degenerate, Were in his eyes as an incorporate flame That burned about her, and the heart thereof And central flower was very fire of love.	Within the compass of the watcher's hand All strengths of other men and divers powers Were held at ease and gathered up as flowers; His heart was as the heart of his whole land, And at his feet as natural servants lay Twilight and dawn and night and laboring day.
But all about her grave wherein she slept Were noises of the wild wind-footed years Whose footprints flying were full of blood and tears, Shrieks as of Mænads on their hills that leapt	He was most awful of the sons of God. Even now men seeing seemed at his lips to see The trumpet of the judgment that should be, And in his right hand terror for a rod, And in the breath that made the mountains bow The horned fire of Moses on his brow.

The strong wind of the coming of the
 Lord
 Had blown as flame upon him, and
 brought down
 On his bare head from heaven fire
 for a crown,
 And fire was girt upon him as a sword
 To smite and lighten, and on what
 ways he trod
 There fell from him the shadow of a
 god.

Pale, with the whole world's judgment
 in his eyes,
 He stood and saw the grief and shame
 endure
 That he, though highest of angels,
 might not cure,
 And the same sins done under the same
 skies,
 And the same slaves to the same
 tyrants thrown,
 And fain he would have slept, and
 fain been stonc.

But with unslumbering eyes he watched
 the sleep
 That sealed her sense whose eyes
 were suns of old;
 And the night shut and opened, and
 behold,
 The same grave where those prophets
 came to weep,
 But she that lay therein had moved
 and stirred,
 And where those twain had watched
 her stood a third.

The tripled rhyme that closed in Para-
 dise
 With Love's name sealing up its
 starry speech;
 The tripled might of hand that found
 in reach
 All crowns beheld far off of all men's
 eyes,
 Song, color, carven wonders of live
 stone, —
 These were not, but the very soul
 alone.

The living spirit, the good gift of grace,
 The faith which takes of its own
 blood to give
 That the dead veins of buried hope
 may live,
 Came on her sleeping, face to naked
 face,
 And from a soul more sweet than all
 the south
 Breathed love upon her sealed and
 breathless mouth.

Between her lips the breath was blown
 as fire,
 And through her flushed veins leapt
 the liquid life,
 And with sore passion and ambigu-
 ous strife
 The new birth rent her and the new
 desire,
 The will to live, the competence to
 be,
 The sense to hearken, and the soul
 to see

And the third prophet standing by her
 grave
 Stretched forth his hand, and touched
 her; and her eyes
 Opened as sudden suns in heaven
 might rise,
 And her soul caught from his the faith
 to save;
 Faith above creeds, faith beyond
 records, born
 Of the pure, naked, fruitful, awful
 morn.

For in the daybreak now that night was
 dead
 The light, the shadow, the delight,
 the pain,
 The purpose and the passion of those
 twain,
 Seemed gathered on that third prophetic
 head;
 And all their crowns were as one
 crown, and one
 His face with her face in the living
 sun.

For even with that communion of their eyes

His whole soul passed into her, and made her strong ;

And all the sounds and shows of shame and wrong,

The hand that slays, the lip that mocks and lies,

Temples and thrones that yet men seem to see, —

Are these dead, or art thou dead, Italy?

AN APPEAL.

I.

ART thou indeed among these,
Thou of the tyrannous crew,
The kingdoms fed upon blood,
O queen from of old of the seas,
England, — art thou of them too
That drink of the poisonous flood,
That hide under poisonous trees?

II.

Nay, thy name from of old,
Mother, was pure, or we dreamed;
Purer we held thee than this,
Purer fain would we hold;
So goodly a glory it seemed,
A fame so bounteous of bliss,
So more precious than gold.

III.

A praise so sweet in our ears,
That thou in the tempest of things
As a rock for a refuge shouldst stand,
In the blood-red river of tears
Poured forth for the triumph of kings;
A safeguard, a sheltering land,
In the thunder and torrent of years.

IV.

Strangers came gladly to thee,
Exiles, chosen of men,
Safe for thy sake in thy shade,
Sat down at thy feet and were free.
So men spake of thee then:
Now shall their speaking be stayed?
Ah, so let it not be!

V.

Not for revenge or affright,
Pride, or a tyrannous lust,
Cast from thee the crown of thy praise.
Mercy was thine in thy might;
Strong when thou wert, thou wert just:
Now, in the wrong-doing days,
Cleave thou, thou at least, to the right.

VI.

How should one charge thee, how
sway,
Save by the memories that were?
Not thy gold, nor the strength of thy
ships,
Nor the might of thine armies at bay,
Made thee, mother, most fair;
But a word from republican lips
Said in thy name, in thy day.

VII.

Hast thou said it, and hast thou forgot?
Is thy praise in thine ears as a scoff?
Blood of men guiltless was shed,
Children, and souls without spot,
Shed, but in places far off:
Let slaughter no more be, said
Milton; and slaughter was not.

VIII.

Was it not said of thee too,
Now, but now, by thy foes,
By the slaves that had slain their
France,
And thee would slay as they slew —
"Down with her walls that enclose
Freemen that eye us askance,
Fugitives, men that are true!"

IX.

This was thy praise or thy blame,
From bondsman or freeman, — to be
Pure from pollution of slaves,
Clean of their sins, and thy name
Bloodless, innocent, free:
Now if thou be not, thy waves
Wash not from off thee thy shame.

X.

Freeman he is not, but slave,
Whoso in fear for the state
Cries for surety of blood,
Help of gibbet and grave;
Neither is any land great
Whom, in her fear-stricken mood,
These things only can save.

XI.

Lo! how fair from afar,
Taintless of tyranny, stands
Thy mighty daughter, for years
Who trod the winepress of war, —
Shines with immaculate hands;
Slays not a foe, neither fears;
Stains not peace with a scar.

XII.

Be not as tyrant or slave,
England; be not as these,
Thou that wert other than they.
Stretch out thine hand, but to save;
Put forth thy strength, and release:
Lest there arise, if thou slay,
Thy shame as a ghost from the grave.
Nov. 20, 1867.

PERINDE AC CADAVER.

IN a vision Liberty stood
By the childless charm-stricken bed
Where, barren of glory and good,
Knowing naught if she would not or
would,
England slept with her dead.

Her face that the foam had whitened,
Her hands that were strong to strive,
Her eyes whence battle had lightened,
Over all was a drawn shroud tightened
To bind her asleep and alive.

She turned and laughed in her dream,
With gray lips arid and cold:
She saw not the face as a beam
Burn on her, but only a gleam
Through her sleep as of new-stamped
gold.

But the goddess, with terrible tears
In the light of her down-drawn eyes,
Spake fire in the dull sealed ears:
"Thou, sick with slumbers and fears,
Wilt thou sleep now indeed, or arise?"

"With dreams, and with words, and
with light
Memories and empty desires,
Thou hast wrapped thyself round all
night:
Thou hast shut up thine heart from the
right,
And warmed thee at burnt-out fires.

"Yet once, if I smote at thy gate,
Thy sons would sleep not, but heard:
O thou that wast found so great,
Art thou smitten with folly or fate,
That thy sons have forgotten my
word?"

"O Cromwell's mother, O breast
That suckled Milton! thy name
That was beautiful then, that was blest,
Is it wholly discredited and deprest,
Trodden under by sloth into shame?"

"Why wilt thou hate me and die?
For none can hate me and live.
What ill have I done to thee? why
Wilt thou turn from me fighting, and
fly,
Who would follow thy feet and for-
give?"

"Thou hast seen me stricken, and said,
What is it to me? I am strong:
Thou hast seen me bowed down on my
dead,
And laughed, and lifted thine head,
And washed thine hands of my
wrong.

"Thou has put out the soul of thy
sight:
Thou hast sought to my foemen as
friend,
To my traitors that kiss me and smite,
To the kingdoms and empires of
night
That begin with the darkness, and
end.

"Turn thee, awaken, arise,
With the light that is risen on the
lands,
With the change of the fresh-colored
skies :
Set thine eyes on mine eyes,
Lay thy hands in my hands."

She moved and mourned as she heard,
Sighed, and shifted her place,
As the wells of her slumber were
stirred

By the music and wind of the word,
Then turned, and covered her face.

"Ah!" she said in her sleep,
"Is my work not done with, and
done?"

Is there corn for my sickle to reap?
And strange is the pathway, and steep,
And sharp overhead is the sun.

"I have done thee service enough,
Loved thee enough in my day:
Now nor hatred nor love
Nor hardly remembrance thereof
Lives in me to lighten my way.

"And is it not well with us here?
Is change as good as is rest?
What hope should move me, or fear
That eye should open or ear,
Who have long since won what is
best?"

"Where among us are such things
As turn men's hearts into hell?
Have we not queens without stings,
Scotched princes, and fangless kings?
Yea," she said, "we are well.

"We have filed the teeth of the snake
Monarchy: how should it bite?
Should the slippery slow thing wake,
It will not sting for my sake;
Yea," she said, "I do right."

So spake she, drunken with dreams,
Mad; but again in her ears
A voice as of storm-swelled streams
Spake: "No brave shame then redeems
Thy lusts of sloth and thy fears?"

"Thy poor lie slain of thine hands,
Their starved limbs rot in thy sight;
As a shadow the ghost of thee stands
Among men living and lands,
And stirs not leftward or right.

"Freeman he is not, but slave,
Who stands not out on my side;
His own hand hollows his grave,
Nor strength is in me to save
Where strength is none to abide.

"Time shall tread on his name
That was written for honor of old,
Who hath taken in change for fame
Dust, and silver, and shame,
Ashes, and iron, and gold."

THE OBLATION.

ASK nothing more of me, sweet:
All I can give you, I give.
Heart of my heart, were it more,
More would be laid at your feet;
Love that should help you to live,
Song that should spur you to soar.

All things were nothing to give,
Once to have sense of you more,
Touch you and taste of you sweet,
Think you and breathe you, and live,
Swept of your wings as they soar,
Trodden by chance of your feet.

I that have love and no more
Give you but love of you, sweet:
He that hath more, let him give;
He that hath wings, let him soar;
Mine is the heart at your feet
Here, that must love you to live.

A SONG OF ITALY.

UPON a windy night of stars that fell
At the wind's spoken spell,
Swept with sharp strokes of agonizing
light
From the clear gulf of night,
Between the fixed and fallen glories
one
Against my vision shone,

More fair and fearful and divine than they
 That measure night and day,
 And worthier worship; and within mine eyes
 The formless folded skies
 Took shape and were unfolded like as flowers.
 And I beheld the hours
 As maidens, and the days as laboring men,
 And the soft nights again
 As wearied women to their own souls wed,
 And ages as the dead.
 And over these living, and them that died,
 From one to the other side
 A lordlier light than comes of earth or air
 Made the world's future fair.
 A woman like to love in face, but not
 A thing of transient lot;
 And like to hope, but having hold on truth;
 And like to joy or youth,
 Save that upon the rock her feet were set;
 And like what men forget,
 Faith, innocence, high thought, laborious peace,—
 And yet like none of these,
 Being not as these are mortal, but with eyes
 That sounded the deep skies,
 And clove like wings or arrows their clear way
 Through night and dawn and day,—
 So fair a presence over star and sun
 Stood, making these as one.
 For in the shadow of her shape were all
 Darkened and held in thrall,
 So mightier rose she past them; and I felt
 Whose form, whose likeness knelt
 With covered hair and face, and clasped her knees;
 And knew the first of these
 Was Freedom, and the second Italy.
 And what sad words said she
 For mine own grief I knew not, nor had heart
 Therewith to bear my part
 And set my songs to sorrow; nor to hear
 How tear by sacred tear
 Fell from her eyes as flowers or notes that fall
 In some slain feaster's hall
 Where in mid music and melodious breath
 Men singing have seen death.
 So fair, so lost, so sweet, she knelt; or so
 In our lost eyes below
 Seemed to us sorrowing; and her speech being said,
 Fell, as one who falls dead.
 And for a little she too wept, who stood
 Above the dust and blood
 And thrones and troubles of the world; then spake,
 As who bids dead men wake:—
 "Because the years were heavy on thy head;
 Because dead things are dead;
 Because thy chosen on hillside, city and plain
 Are shed as drops of rain;
 Because all earth was black, all heaven was blind,
 And we cast out of mind;
 Because men wept, saying *Freedom*, knowing of thee,
 Child, that thou wast not free:
 Because wherever blood was not shame was
 Where thy pure foot did pass;
 Because on Promethean rocks distent
 Thee fouler eagles rent;
 Because a serpent stains with slime and foam
 This that is not thy Rome;
 Child of my womb, whose limbs were made in me,
 Have I forgotten thee?
 In all thy dreams through all these years on wing,
 Hast thou dreamed such a thing?
 The mortal mother-bird out-soars her nest,
 The child outgrows the breast;
 But suns as stars shall fall from heaven and cease,
 Ere we twain be as these:

Yea, utmost skies forget their utmost
sun,

Ere we twain be not one.

My lesser jewels sewn on skirt and hem,
I have no heed of them
Obscured and flawed by sloth or craft
or power;

But thou, that wast my flower,
The blossom bound between my brows,
and worn

In sight of even and morn
From the last ember of the flameless
west

To the dawn's baring breast —
I were not Freedom if thou wert not
free,

Nor thou wert Italy.

O mystic rose ingrained with blood,
impearled

With tears of all the world!

The torpor of their blind brute-ridden
trance

Kills England and chills France;
And Spain sobs hard through stran-
gling blood; and snows

Hide the huge eastern woes.

But thou, twin-born with morning,
nursed of noon,

And blessed of star and moon!

What shall avail to assail thee any more,
From sacred shore to shore?

Have Time and Love not knelt down
at thy feet,

Thy sore, thy soiled, thy sweet,
Fresh from the flints and mire of mur-
derous ways

And dust of travelling days?

Hath Time not kissed them, Love not
washed them fair,

And wiped with tears and hair?

Though God forget thee, I will not for-
get;

Though heaven and earth be set
Against thee, O unconquerable child,
Abused, abased, reviled,

Lift thou not less from no funereal bed
Thine undishonored head;

Love thou not less, by lips of thine once
prest,

This my now barren breast;

Seek thou not less, being well assured
thereof,

O child, my latest love.

For now the barren bosom shall bear
fruit,

Songs leap from lips long mute,
And with my milk the mouths of nations
fed

Again be glad and red
That were worn white with hunger and
sorrow and thirst;

And thou, most fair and first,
Thou whose warm hands and sweet live
lips I feel

Upon me for a seal,
Thou whose least looks, whose smiles
and little sighs,

Whose passionate pure eyes,
Whose dear fair limbs that neither
bonds could bruise

Nor hate of men misuse,
Whose flower-like breath and bosom,
O my child,

O mine and undefiled,
Fill with such tears as burn like bitter
wine

These mother's eyes of mine,
Thrill with huge passions and primeval
pains

The fulness of my veins.
O sweetest head seen higher than any
stands,

I touch thee with mine hands,
I lay my lips upon thee, O thou most
sweet,

To lift thee on thy feet,
And with the fire of mine to fill thine
eyes;

I say unto thee, Arise."

She ceased, and heaven was full of flame
and sound,

And earth's old limbs unbound
Shone and waxed warm with fiery dew
and seed

Shed through her at this her need:
And highest in heaven, a mother and
full of grace,

With no more covered face,
With no more lifted hands and bended
knees,

Rose, as from sacred seas
Love, when old time was full of plente-
ous springs,

That fairest-born of things,

The land that holds the rest in tender thrall

For love's sake in them all,
That binds with words and holds with eyes and hands

All hearts in all men's lands.
So died the dream whence rose the live desire

That here takes form and fire,
A spirit from the splendid grave of sleep
Risen, that ye should not weep, —
Should not weep more nor ever, O ye that hear,

And ever have held her dear,
Seeing now indeed she weeps not who wept sore,

And sleeps not any more.
Hearken ye towards her, O people,
exalt your eyes;
Is this a thing that dies?

Italia! by the passion of the pain

That bent and rent thy chain;
Italia! by the breaking of the bands,

The shaking of the lands;
Beloved, O men's mother, O men's queen,

Arise, appear, be seen!
Arise, array thyself in manifold
Queen's raiment of wrought gold;
With girdles of green freedom, and with red

Roses, and white snow shed
Above the flush and frondage of the hills

That all thy deep dawn fills
And all thy clear night veils and warms with wings

Spread till the morning sings;
The rose of resurrection, and the bright
Breast lavish of the light,

The lady lily like the snowy sky
Ere the stars wholly die;
As red as blood, and whiter than a wave,

Flowers grown as from thy grave,
From the green fruitful grass in May-time hot,

Thy grave, where thou art not.
Gather the grass and weave, in sacred sign

Of the ancient earth divine,

The holy heart of things, the seed of birth,

The mystical warm earth.
O thou her flower of flowers, with treble braid

Be thy sweet head arrayed,
In witness of her mighty motherhood
Who bore thee and found thee good,

Her fairest-born of children, on whose head

Her green and white and red
Are hope and light and life, inviolate
Of any latter fate.

Fly, O our flag, through deep Italian air,

Above the flags that were,
The dusty shreds of shameful battle-flags

Trampled and rent in rags,
As withering woods in autumn's bitterest breath

Yellow, and black as death;
Black as crushed worms that sicken in the sense,

And yellow as pestilence.
Fly, green as summer and red as dawn and white

As the live heart of light,
The blind bright womb of color unborn, that brings

Forth all fair forms of things,
As freedom all fair forms of nations dyed

In divers-colored pride.
Fly fleet as wind on every wind that blows

Between her seas and snows,
From Alpine white, from Tuscan green, and where

Vesuvius reddens air.
Fly! and let all men see it, and all kings wail,

And priests wax faint and pale,
And the cold hordes that moan in misty places

And the funereal races
And the sick serfs of lands that wait and wane

See thee and hate thee in vain.
In the clear laughter of all winds and waves,

In the blown grass of graves,

In the long sound of fluctuant boughs
of trees,

In the broad breath of seas,
Bid the sound of thy flying folds be
heard;

And as a spoken word
Full of that fair god and that merciless
Who rends the Pythoness,
So be the sound and so the fire that
saith

She feels her ancient breath
And the old blood move in her im-
mortal veins.

Strange travail and strong pains,
Our mother, hast thou borne these many
years

While thy pure blood and tears
Mixed with the Tyrrhene and the Adrian
sea.

Light things were said of thee,
As of one buried deep among the dead;
Yea, she hath been, they said,
She was when time was younger, and is
not;

The very cerecloths rot
That flutter in the dusty wind of death,
Not moving with her breath;
Far seasons and forgotten years enfold
Her dead corpse old and cold
With many winter winters and pale
springs:

She is none of this world's things.
Though her dead head like a live gar-
land wear

The golden-growing hair
That flows over her breast down to her
feet,

Dead queens, whose life was sweet
In sight of all men living, have been
found

So cold, so clad, so crowned,
With all things faded and with one
thing fair,

Their old immortal hair,
When flesh and bone turned dust at
touch of day:

And she is dead as they.

So men said sadly, mocking; so the
slave,

Whose life was his soul's grave;

So, pale or red with change of fast and
feast,

The sanguine-sandalled priest;
So the Austrian, when his fortune came
to flood,

And the warm wave was blood;
With wings that widened and with beak
that smote,

So shrieked through either throat
From the hot horror of its northern
nest

That double-headed pest;
So, triple-crowned with fear and fraud
and shame,

He of whom treason came,
The herdsman of the Gadarean swine;
So all his ravening kine,

Made fat with poisonous pasture: so
not we,
Mother, beholding thee.

Make answer, O the crown of all our
slain,

Ye that were one, being twain,
Twain brethren, twin-born to the sec-
ond birth,

Chosen out of all our earth
To be the prophesying stars that
say

How hard is night on day,
Stars in serene and sudden heaven re-
risen

Before the sun break prison
And ere the moon be wasted; fair first
flowers

In that red wreath of ours
Woven with the lives of all whose lives
were shed

To crown their mother's head
With leaves of civic cypress and thick
yew,

Till the olive bind it too,
Olive and laurel and all loftier leaves
That victory wears or weaves

At her fair feet for her beloved brow;
Hear, for she too hears now,
O Pisacane, from Calabrian sands;

O all heroic hands
Close on the sword-hilt, hands of all
her dead;

O many a holy head,
Bowed for her sake even to her reddening
dust;

O chosen, O pure and just,

Who counted for a small thing life's
estate,
And died, and made it great;
Ye whose names mix with all her
memories; ye
Who rather chose to see
Death, than our more intolerable things;
Thou whose name withers kings,
Agesilao; thou too, O chieftiest thou,
The slayer of splendid brow,
Laid where the lying lips of fear deride
The foiled tyrannicide,
Foiled, fallen, slain, scorned, and happy;
being in fame,
Felice, like thy name,
Not like thy fortune; father of the fight,
Having in hand our light.
Ah, happy! for that sudden-swerving
hand
Flung light on all thy land,
Yea, lit blind France with compulsory
ray,
Driven down a righteous way;
Ah, happiest! for from thee the wars
began,
From thee the fresh springs ran;
From thee the lady land that queens
the earth
Gat as she gave new birth.
O sweet mute mouths, O all fair dead
of ours,
Fair in her eyes as flowers,
Fair without feature, vocal without
voice,
Strong without strength, rejoice!
Hear it with ears that hear not, and on
eyes
That see not let it rise,
Rise as a sundawn; be it as dew that
drips
On dumb and dusty lips;
Eyes have ye not, and see it; neither
ears,
And there is none but hears.
This is the same for whom ye bled and
wept;
She was not dead, but slept.
'This is that very Italy which was
And is and shall not pass.
But thou, though all were not well done,
O chief,
Must thou take shame or grief?

Because one man is not as thou or ten,
Must thou take shame for men?
Because the supreme sunrise is not yet.
Is the young dew not wet?
Wilt thou not yet abide a little while,
Soul without fear or guile,
Mazzini, — O our prophet, O our priest,
A little while at least?
A little hour of doubt and of control,
Sustain thy sacred soul;
Withhold thine heart, our father, but
an hour;
Is it not here, the flower,
Is it not blown and fragrant from the
root,
And shall not be the fruit?
Thy children, even thy people thou hast
made,
Thine, with thy words arrayed,
Clothed with thy thoughts and girt with
thy desires,
Yearn up toward thee as fires.
Art thou not father, O father, of all
these?
From thine own Genoese
To where of nights the lower extreme
lagune
Feels its Venetian moon,
Nor suckling's mouth nor mother's
breast set free
But hath that grace through thee.
The milk of life on death's unnatural
brink
Thou gavest them to drink,
The natural milk of freedom; and again
They drank, and they were men.
The wine and honey of freedom and of
faith
They drank, and cast off death.
Bear with them now; thou art holier.
yet endure,
Till they as thou be pure.
Their swords at least that stemmed half
Austria's tide
Bade all its bulk divide;
Else, though fate bade them for a
breath's space fall,
She had not fallen at all.
Not by their hands they made time's
promise true;
Not by their hands, but through.
Nor on Custoza ran their blood to waste.
Nor fell their fame defaced

Whom stormiest Adria with tumultuous
 tides
 Whirls undersea and hides.
 Not his, who from the sudden-settling
 deck
 Looked over death and wreck
 To where the mother's bosom shone,
 who smiled
 As he, so dying, her child;
 For he smiled surely, dying, to mix his
 death
 With her memorial breath;
 Smiled, being most sure of her, that in
 no wise,
 Die whoso will, she dies:
 And she smiled surely, fair and far
 above,
 Wept not, but smiled for love.
 Thou too, O splendour of the sudden
 sword
 That drove the crews abhorred
 From Naples and the siren-footed
 strand,
 Flash from thy master's hand,
 Shine from the middle summer of the
 seas
 To the old Æolides,
 Outshine their fiery fumes of burning
 night,
 Sword, with thy midday light;
 Flame as a beacon from the Tyrrhene
 foam
 To the rent heart of Rome,
 From the island of her lover and thy
 lord,
 Her savior and her sword.
 In the fierce year of failure and of fame,
 Art thou not yet the same
 That wast as lightning swifter than all
 wings
 In the blind face of kings?
 When priests took counsel to devise
 despair,
 And princes to forswear,
 She clasped thee, O her sword and flag-
 bearer
 And staff and shield to her,
 O Garibaldi! need was hers and grief,
 Of thee and of the chief,
 And of another girt in arms to stand
 As good of hope and hand,
 As high of soul and happy, albeit indeed
 The heart should burn and bleed,

So but the spirit shake not nor the
 breast
 Swerve, but abide its rest,
 As theirs did and as thine, though ruin
 clomb
 The highest wall of Rome,
 Though treason stained and spilt her
 lustral water,
 And slaves led slaves to slaughter,
 And priests, praying and slaying,
 watched them pass
 From a strange France, alas!
 That was not freedom; yet when these
 were past
 Thy sword and thou stood fast,
 Till new men seeing thee where Sicilian
 waves
 Hear now no sound of slaves,
 And where thy sacred blood is fragrant
 still
 Upon the Bitter Hill,
 Seeing by that blood one country saved
 and stained,
 Less loved thee crowned than chained,
 And less now only than the chief: for
 he,
 Father of Italy,
 Uppore in holy hands the babe new-
 born
 Through loss and sorrow and scorn,
 Of no man led, of many men reviled;
 Till, lo! the new-born child
 Gone from between his hands, and in its
 place,
 Lo, the fair mother's face.
 Blessed is he of all men, being in one
 As father to her and son,
 Blessed of all men living, that he found
 Her weak limbs bared and bound,
 And in his arms and in his bosom bore,
 And as a garment wore
 Her weight of want, and as a royal
 dress
 Put on her weariness.
 As in faith's hoariest histories men
 read,
 The strong man bore at need
 Through roaring rapids when all heaven
 was wild
 The likeness of a child
 That still waxed greater and heavier as
 he trod,
 And altered, and was God.

Praise him, O winds that move the
 molten air,
 O light of days that were,
 And light of days that shall be; land
 and sea,
 And heaven and Italy:
 Praise him, O storm and summer, shore
 and wave,
 O skies and every grave;
 O weeping hopes, O memories beyond
 tears,
 O many and murmuring years,
 O sounds far off in time and visions
 far,
 O sorrow with thy star,
 And joy with all thy beacons; ye that
 mourn,
 And ye whose light is born;
 O fallen faces, and O souls arisen,
 Praise him from tomb and prison,
 Praise him from heaven and sunlight;
 and ye floods,
 And windy waves of woods;
 Ye valleys and wild vineyards, ye lit
 lakes
 And happier hillside brakes,
 Untrampled by the accursed feet that
 trod
 Fields golden from their god,
 Fields of their god forsaken, whereof
 none
 Sees his face in the sun,
 Hears his voice from the floweriest
 wildernesses;
 And, barren of his tresses,
 Ye bays unplucked and laurels unin-
 twined,
 That no men break or bind,
 And myrtles long forgetful of the
 sword,
 And olives unadored,
 Wisdom and love, white hands that save
 and slay,
 Praise him; and ye as they,
 Praise him, O gracious might of dews
 and rains
 That feed the purple plains,
 O sacred sunbeams bright as bare steel
 drawn,
 O cloud and fire and dawn;
 Red hills of flame, white Alps, green
 Apennines,
 Banners of blowing pines,

Standards of stormy snows, flags of light
 leaves,
 Three wherewith Freedom weaves
 One ensign that once woven and once
 unfurled
 Makes day of all a world,
 Makes blind their eyes who knew not,
 and outraves
 The waste of iron waves;
 Ye fields of yellow fulness, ye fresh
 fountains,
 And mists of many mountains;
 Ye moons and seasons, and ye days
 and nights;
 Ye starry-headed heights,
 And gorges melting sunward from the
 snow,
 And all strong streams that flow,
 Tender as tears, and fair as faith, and
 pure
 As hearts made sad and sure
 At once by many sufferings and one love;
 O mystic deathless dove
 Held to the heart of earth and in her
 hands
 Cherished, O lily of lands,
 White rose of time, dear dream of
 praises past, —
 For such as these thou wast,
 That art as eagles setting to the sun,
 As fawns that leap and run,
 As a sword carved with keen floral gold,
 Sword for an armed god's hold,
 Flower for a crowned god's forehead, —
 O our land,
 Reach forth thine holiest hand,
 O mother of many sons and memories,
 Stretch out thine hand to his
 That raised and gave thee life to run
 and leap
 When thou wast full of sleep,
 That touched and stung thee with young
 blood and breath
 When thou wast hard on death.
 Praise him, O all her cities and her
 crowns,
 Her towers and thrones of towns;
 O noblest Brescia, scarred from foot to
 head
 And breast-deep in the dead,
 Praise him from all the glories of thy
 graves
 That yellow Mela laves

<p>With gentle and golden water, whose fair flood Ran wider with thy blood : Praise him, O born of that heroic breast, O nursed thereat and blest, Verona, fairer than thy mother fair, But not more brave to bear : Praise him, O Milan, whose imperial tread Bruised once the German head ; Whose might, by northern swords left desolate, Set foot on fear and fate : Praise him, O long mute mouth of melodies, Mantua, with louder keys, With mightier chords of music even than rolled From the large harps of old, When thy sweet singer of golden throat and tongue, Praising his tyrant, sung ; Though now thou sing not as of other days, Learn late a better praise. Not with the sick sweet lips of slaves that sing, Praise thou no priest or king, No brow-bound laurel of discolored leaf, But him, the crownless chief. Praise him, O star of sun-forgotten times, Among their creeds and crimes That wast a fire of witness in the night, Padua, the wise men's light : Praise him, O sacred Venice, and the sea That now exults through thee, Full of the mighty morning and the sun, Free of things dead and done ; Praise him from all the years of thy great grief, That shook thee like a leaf With winds and snows of torment, rain that fell Red as the rains of hell, Storms of black thunder and of yellow flame, And all ill things but shame ; Praise him with all thy holy heart and strength ; Through thy walls' breadth and length</p>	<p>Praise him with all thy people, that their voice Bid the strong soul rejoice, The fair clear supreme spirit beyond stain, Pure as the depth of pain, High as the head of suffering, and se- cure As all things that endure. More than thy blind lord of an hundred years Whose name our memory hears, Home-bound from harbors of the By- zantine Made tributary of thine, Praise him who gave no gifts from over- sea, But gave thyself to thee. O mother Genoa, through all years that run, More than that other son, Who first beyond the seals of sunset prest Even to the unfooted west, Whose back-blown flag scared from their sheltering seas The unknown Atlantides, And as flame climbs through cloud and vapor clomb Through streams of storm and foam, Till half in sight they saw land heave and swim, — More than this man praise him. One found a world new-born from virgin sea ; And one found Italy. O heavenliest Florence, from the mouths of flowers Fed by melodious hours, From each sweet mouth that kisses light and air, Thou whom thy fate made fair, As a bound vine or any flowering tree, Praise him who made thee free. For no grape-gatherers trampling out the wine Tread thee, the fairest vine ; For no man binds thee, no man bruises, none Does with thee as these have done. From where spring hears loud through her long lit vales Triumphant nightingales,</p>
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In many a fold of fiery foliage hid-
den,
Withheld as things forbidden,
But clamorous with innumerable de-
light
In May's red, green, and white,
In the far-floated standard of the spring,
That bids men also sing,
Our flower of flags, our witness that we
are free,
Our lamp for land and sea;
From where Majano feels through corn
and vine,
Spring move and melt as wine,
And Fiesole's embracing arms enclose
The immeasurable rose;
From hillsides plumed with pine, and
heights wind-worn
That feel the refluxing morn,
Or where the moon's face warm and
passionate
Burns, and men's hearts grow great,
And the swollen eyelids labor with sweet
tears,
And in their burning ears
Sound throbs like flame, and in their
eyes new light
Kindles the trembling night;
From faint illumined fields and starry
valleys
Wherefrom the hill-wind sallies,
From Vallombrosa, from Valdarno raise
One Tuscan tune of praise.
O lordly city of the field of death,
Praise him with equal breath,
From sleeping streets and gardens, and
the stream
That threads them as a dream
Threads without light the untravelled
ways of sleep
With eyes that smile or weep;
From the sweet sombre beauty of wave
and wall
That fades and does not fall;
From colored domes and cloisters fair
with fame,
Praise thou and thine his name.
Thou too, O little laurelled town of
towers,
Clothed with the flame of flowers,
From windy ramparts girdled with
young gold,
From thy sweet hillside fold

Of wallflowers and the acacia's belted
bloom
And every blowing plume,
Halls that saw Dante speaking, chapels
fair
As the outer hills and air,
Praise him who feeds the fire that Dante
fed,
Our highest heroic head,
Whose eyes behold through floated
cloud and flame
The maiden face of fame
Like April's in Valdelsa; fair as flowers,
And patient as the hours;
Sad with slow sense of time, and bright
with faith
That levels life and death;
The final fame, that with a foot sub-
lime
Treads down reluctant time;
The fame that waits and watches and is
wise,
A virgin with chaste eyes,
A goddess who takes hands with great
men's grief;
Praise her, and him, our chief.
Praise him, O Siena, and thou her deep
green spring,
O Fonte Branda, sing:
Shout from the red clefts of thy fiery
crag,
Shake out thy flying flags
In the long wind that streams from hill
to hill;
Bid thy full music fill
The desolate red waste of sunset air
And fields the old time saw fair,
But now the hours ring void through
ruined lands,
Wild work of mortal hands;
Yet through thy dead Maremma let his
name
Take flight and pass in flame,
And the red ruin of disastrous hours
Shall quicken into flowers.
Praise him, O fiery child of sun and sea,
Naples, who bade thee be;
For till he sent the swords that scourge
and save,
Thou wast not, but thy grave.
But more than all these praise him and
give thanks,
Thou, from thy Tiber's banks,

From all thine hills and from thy supreme dome,—

Praise him, O risen Rome!

Let all thy children cities at thy knee

Lift up their voice with thee,

Saying, "For thy love's sake and our perished grief

We laud thee, O our chief!"

Saying, "For thine hand and help when hope was dead

We thank thee, O our head!"

Saying, "For thy voice and face within our sight

We bless thee, O our light;

For waters cleansing us from days defiled

We praise thee, O our child!"

So with an hundred cities' mouths in one

Praising thy supreme son,

Son of thy sorrow, O mother, O maid and mother,

Our queen, who serve none other,

Our lady of pity and mercy, and full of grace,

Turn otherwhere thy face,

Turn for a little and look what things are these

Now fallen before thy knees;

Turn upon them thine eyes who hated thee,

Behold what things they be,

Italia: these are stubble that were steel,

Dust, or a turning wheel;

As leaves, as snow, as sand, that were so strong;

And howl, for all their song,

And wail, for all their wisdom; they that were

So great, they are all stript bare;

They are all made empty of beauty, and all abhorred;

They are shivered, and their sword;

They are slain who slew, they are heartless who were wise;

Yea, turn on these thine eyes,

O thou, soliciting with soul sublime

The obscure soul of time,

Thou, with the wounds thy holy body bears

From broken swords of theirs,

Thou, with the sweet swoln eyelids that have bled

Tears for thy thousands dead,

And upon these, whose swords drank up like dew

The sons of thine they slew,

These, whose each gun blasted with murdering mouth

Live flowers of thy fair south,

These, whose least evil told in alien ears

Turned men's whole blood to tears,

These, whose least sin remembered for pure shame

Turned all those tears to flame,

Even upon these, when breaks the extreme blow

And all the world cries woe,

When heaven reluctant rains long-suffering fire

On these and their desire,

When his wind shakes them and his waters whelm

Who rent thy robe and realm,

When they that poured thy dear blood forth as wine

Pour forth their own for thine,

On these, on these have mercy; not in hate,

But full of sacred fate,

Strong from the shrine and splendid from the god,

Smite, with no second rod.

Because they spared not, do thou rather spare:

Be not one thing they were.

Let not one tongue of theirs who hate thee say

That thou wast even as they.

Because their hands were bloody, be thine white;

Show light where they shed night:

Because they are foul, be thou the rather pure;

Because they are feeble, endure;

Because they had no pity, have thou pity.

And thou, O supreme city,

O priestless Rome that shalt be, take in trust

Their names, their deeds, their dust,

Who held life less than thou wert; be the least

To thee indeed a priest,

Priest and burnt-offering and blood-sacrifice
 Given without prayer or price,
 A holier immolation than men wist,
 A costlier eucharist,
 A sacrament more saving; bend thine head
 Above these many dead
 Once, and salute with thine eternal eyes
 Their lowest head that lies.
 Speak from thy lips of immemorial speech
 If but one word for each.
 Kiss but one kiss on each thy dead son's mouth
 Fallen dumb or north or south;
 And laying but once thine hand on brow and breast,
 Bless them, through whom thou art blest.
 And saying in ears of these thy dead
 "Well done,"
 Shall they not hear, "O son?"
 And bowing thy face to theirs made pale for thee,
 Shall the shut eyes not see?
 Yea, through the hollow-hearted world of death,
 As light, as blood, as breath,
 Shall there not flash and flow the fiery sense,
 The pulse of prescience?
 Shall not these know as in times over-past
 Thee loftiest to the last?
 For times and wars shall change, kingdoms and creeds,
 And dreams of men, and deeds;
 Earth shall grow gray with all her golden things,
 Pale peoples and hoar kings;
 But though her thrones and towers of nations fall,
 Death has no part in all;
 In the air, nor in the imperishable sea,
 Nor heaven, nor truth, nor thee.
 Yea, let all sceptre-stricken nations lie,
 But live thou though they die;
 Let their flags fade as flowers that storm can mar,
 But thine be like a star;
 Let England's, if it float not for men free,
 Fall, and forget the sea;

Let France's, if it shadow a hateful head,
 Drop as a leaf drops dead;
 Thine let what storm soever smite the rest
 Smite as it seems him best;
 Thine let the wind that can, by sea or land,
 Wrest from thy banner-hand.
 Die they in whom dies freedom, die and cease,
 Though the world weep for these;
 Live thou, and love and lift when these lie dead
 The green and white and red.

O our Republic that shalt bind in bands
 The kingdomless far lands,
 And link the chainless ages; thou that wast
 With England ere she past
 Among the faded nations, and shalt be
 Again, when sea to sea
 Calls through the wind and light of morning time,
 And throneless clime to clime
 Makes antiphonal answer; thou that art
 Where one man's perfect heart
 Burns, one man's brow is brightened for thy sake,
 Thine, strong to make or break;
 O fair Republic hallowing with stretched hands
 The limitless free lands,
 When all men's heads for love, not fear,
 bow down
 To thy sole royal crown,
 As thou to freedom; when man's life
 smells sweet,
 And at thy bright swift feet
 A bloodless and a bondless world is laid;
 Then, when thy men are made,
 Let these indeed as we in dreams behold
 One chosen of all thy fold,
 One of all fair things fairest, one exalt
 Above all fear or fault,
 One unforgetful of unhappier men
 And us who loved her then;
 With eyes that outlook suns and dream
 on graves;
 With voice like quiring waves;

With heart the holier for their memories' sake

Who slept that she might wake ;
With breast the sweeter for that sweet blood lost,

And all the milkless cost ;
Lady of earth, whose large equality Bends but to her and thee ;

Equal with heaven, and infinite of years,
And splendid from quenched tears ;
Strong with old strength of great things fallen and fled,

Diviner for her dead ;
Chaste of all stains and perfect from all scars,

Above all storms and stars,
All winds that blow through time, all waves that foam, —

Our Capitolian Rome.

THALASSIUS.

UPON the flowery forefront of the year,

One wandering by the gray-green April sea

Found on a reach of shingle and shallower sand,

Inlaid with starrier glimmering jewelery

Left for the sun's love and the light wind's cheer

Along the foam-flowered strand,
Breeze-brightened, something nearer sea than land

Though the last shoreward blossom-fringe was near,

A babe asleep, with flower-soft face that gleamed

To sun and seaward as it laughed and dreamed,

Too sure of either love for either's fear,

Albeit so birdlike slight and light, it seemed

Nor man, nor mortal child of man, but fair

As even its twin-born tenderer spray-flowers were,

That the wind scatters like an Oread's hair.

For when July strewed fire on earth and sea

The last time ere that year,
Out of the flame of morn Cymothoë Beheld one brighter than the sun-bright sphere

Move toward her from its fieriest heart, whence trod

The live sun's very god,
Across the foam-bright water-ways that are

As heavenlier heavens, with star for answering star ;

And on her eyes and hair and maiden mouth

Felt a kiss falling fierier than the South,
And heard above afar

A noise of songs and wind-enamoured wings,

And lutes and lyres of milder and mightier strings,

And round the resonant radiance of his car

Where depth is one with height,
Light heard as music, music seen as light ;

And with that second moondawn of the spring's

That fosters the first rose,
A sun-child whiter than the sunlit snows

Was born out of the world of sunless things

That round the round earth flows and ebbs and flows.

But he that found the sea-flower by the sea,

And took to foster like a graft of earth,
Was born of man's most highest and heavenliest birth,

Free-born as winds and stars and waves are free ;

A warrior gray with glories more than years,

Though more of years than change the quick to dead

Had rained their light and darkness on his head ;

A singer that in time's and memory's ears

Should leave such words to sing as all his peers

Might praise with hallowing heat of
 rapturous tears,
 Till all the days of human flight were
 fled.
 And at his knees his fostering was fed,
 Not with man's wine and bread,
 Nor mortal mother-milk of hopes and
 fears,
 But food of deep memorial days long
 sped;
 For bread with wisdom, and with song
 for wine,
 Clear as the full calm's emerald hyaline.
 And from his grave glad lips the boy
 would gather
 Fine honey of song-notes, goldener than
 gold,
 More sweet than bees make of the
 breathing heather,
 That he, as glad and bold,
 Might drink as they, and keep his spirit
 from cold.
 And the boy loved his laurel-laden hair
 As his own father's risen on the eastern
 air,
 And that less white brow-binding bay-
 leaf bloom,
 More than all flowers his father's eyes
 relume;
 And those high songs he heard,
 More than all notes of any landward
 bird,
 More than all sounds less free
 Than the wind's quiring to the choral
 sea.

 High things the high song taught
 him: how the breath,
 Too frail for life, may be more strong
 than death;
 And this poor flash of sense in life, that
 gleams
 As a ghost's glory in dreams,
 More stable than the world's own
 heart's root seems,
 By that strong faith of lordliest love,
 which gives
 To death's own sightless-seeming eyes
 a light
 Clearer, to death's bare bones a verier
 might,
 Than shines or strikes from any man
 that lives;

How he that loves life overmuch shall
 die
 The dog's death, utterly;
 And he that much less loves it than he
 hates
 All wrong-doing that is done,
 Anywhere always underneath the sun,
 Shall live a mightier life than time's or
 fate's.
 One fairer thing he showed him, and
 in might
 More strong than day and night,
 Whose strengths build up time's tower-
 ing period;
 Yea, one thing stronger and more high
 than God,
 Which, if man had not, then should God
 not be:
 And that was Liberty.
 And gladly should man die to gain, he
 said,
 Freedom; and gladlier, having lost, lie
 dead.
 For man's earth was not, nor the sweet
 sea-waves
 His, nor his own land, nor its very
 graves,
 Except they bred not, bore not, hid not
 slaves:
 But all of all that is,
 Were one man free in body and soul,
 were his.

 And the song softened, even as
 heaven by night
 Softens, from sunnier down to starrier
 light,
 And with its moon-bright breath
 Blessed life for death's sake, and for
 life's sake death;
 Till as the moon's own beam and breath
 confuse,
 In one clear hueless haze of glimmering
 hues,
 The sea's line, and the land's line, and
 the sky's,
 And light for love of darkness almost
 dies,
 As darkness only lives for light's dear
 love,
 Whose hands the robe of night is woven
 of:

So in that heaven of wondrous words
 were life
 And death brought out of strife;
 Yea, by that strong spell of serene in-
 crease,
 Brought out of strife to peace.

And the song lightened, as the wind
 at morn
 Flashes, and even with lightning of the
 wind
 Night's thick-spun web is thinned,
 And all its weft unwoven and over-
 worn
 Shrinks, as might love from scorn.
 And as when wind and light, on water
 and land,
 Leap as twin gods from heavenward
 hand in hand,
 And with the sound and splendor of
 their leap
 Strike darkness dead, and daunt the
 spirit of sleep,
 And burn it up with fire;
 So with the light that lightened from
 the lyre,
 Was all the bright heat in the child's
 heart stirred,
 And blown with blasts of music into
 flame,
 Till even his sense became
 Fire, as the sense that fires the singing
 bird,
 Whose song calls night by name.
 And in the soul within the sense began
 The manlike passion of a godlike man,
 And in the sense within the soul again
 Thoughts that make men of gods, and
 gods of men.

For love the high song taught him, —
 love that turns
 God's heart toward man as man's to
 Godward; love
 That life and death and life are fash-
 ioned of,
 From the first breath that burns
 Half-kindled on the flower-like year-
 ling's lip
 So light and faint that life seems like
 to slip,

To that yet weaklier drawn
 When sunset dies of night's devouring
 dawn;
 But the man dying not wholly as all
 men dies
 If aught be left of his in live men's eyes
 Out of the dawnless dark of death to
 rise;
 If aught of deed or word
 Be seen for all time, or of all time
 heard.
 Love, that though body and soul were
 overthrown,
 Should live for love's sake of itself
 alone,
 Though spirit and flesh were one thing
 doomed and dead,
 Not wholly annihilated.
 Seeing even the hoariest ash-flake that
 the pyre
 Drops, and forgets the thing was once
 a fire,
 And gave its heart to feed the pile's full
 flame
 Till its own heart its own heat over-
 came,
 Outlives its own life, though by scarce
 a span,
 As such men dying outlive themselves
 in man,
 Outlive themselves forever; if the heat
 Outburn the heart that kindled it, the
 sweet
 Outlast the flower whose soul it was,
 and flit
 Forth of the body of it
 Into some new shape of a strange per-
 fume
 More potent than its light live spirit of
 bloom, —
 How shall not something of that soul
 re-live,
 That only soul that had such gifts to
 give
 As lighten something even of all men's
 doom,
 Even from the laboring womb,
 Even to the seal set on the unopening
 tomb?
 And these the loving light of song and
 love
 Shall wrap and lap round, and impend
 above,

Imperishable; and all springs born il-
lume
Their sleep with brighter thoughts than
wake the dove
To music, when the hillside winds re-
sume
The marriage-song of heather-flower
and broom
And all the joy thereof.

And hate the song, too, taught him, —
hate of all
That brings or holds in thrall
Of spirit or flesh, free-born ere God be-
gan,
The holy body and sacred soul of man.
And wheresoever a curse was, or a
chain,
A throne for torment or a crown for
bane
Rose, moulded out of poor men's molten
pain,
There, said he, should man's heaviest
hate be set
Inexorably, to faint not or forget
Till the last warmth bled forth of the
last vein
In flesh that none should call a king's
again,
Seeing wolves and dogs and birds that
plague-strike air
Leave the last bone of all the carrion
bare.

And hope the high song taught him,
— hope whose eyes
Can sound the seas unsoundable, the
skies
Inaccessible of eyesight; that can see
What earth beholds not, hear what wind
and sea
Hear not, and speak what all these cry-
ing in one
Can speak not to the sun.
For in her sovereign eyelight all things
are
Clear as the closest seen and kindlier
star
That marries morn and even and win-
ter and spring
With one love's golden ring.

For she can see the days of man, the
birth
Of good, and death of evil things on
earth
Inevitable and infinite, and sure
As present pain is, or herself is pure.
Yea, she can hear and see, beyond all
things
That lighten from before Time's thun-
derous wings
Through the awful circle of wheel-
winged periods,
The tempest of the twilight of all
gods;
And, higher than all the circling course
they ran,
The sundawn of the spirit that was
man.

And fear the song, too, taught him, —
fear to be
Worthless the dear love of the wind
and sea
That bred him fearless, like a sea-mew
reared
In rocks of man's foot feared,
Where naught of wingless life may sing
or shine.
Fear to wax worthless of that heaven
he had
When all the life in all his limbs was
glad,
And all the drops in all his veins were
wine,
And all the pulses music; when his
heart,
Singing, bade heaven and wind and sea
bear part
In one live song's reiteration, and they
bore:
Fear to go crownless of the flower he
wore
When the winds loved him, and the
waters knew
The blithest life that clove their blithe
life through
With living limbs exultant, or held
strife
More amorous than all dalliance aye
anew
With the bright breath and strength of
their large life,

With all strong wrath of all sheer
winds that blew,
All glories of all storms of the air that
fell
Prone, ineluctable,
With roar from heaven of revel, and
with hue
As of a heaven turned hell.
For when the red blast of their breath
had made
All heaven aflush with light more dire
than shade,
He felt it in his blood and eyes and
hair
Burn as if all the fires of the earth and
air
Had laid strong hold upon his flesh,
and stung
The soul behind it as with serpent's
tongue,
Forked like the loveliest lightnings:
nor could bear
But hardly, half distraught with strong
delight,
The joy that like a garment wrapped
him round,
And lapped him over and under
With raiment of great light,
And rapture of great sound
At every loud leap earthward of the
thunder
From heaven's most furthest bound :
So seemed all heaven in hearing and in
sight,
Alive and mad with glory and angry
joy,
That something of its marvellous mirth
and might
Moved even to madness, fledged as even
for flight,
The blood and spirit of one but mortal
boy.

So, clothed with love, and fear that
love makes great,
And armed with hope and hate,
He set first foot upon the spring-flow-
ered ways
That all feet pass and praise.
And one dim dawn between the winter
and spring,
In the sharp harsh wind harrying heaven
and earth

To put back April that had borne his
birth
From sunward on her sunniest shower-
struck wing,
With tears and laughter for the dew-
dropt thing,
Slight as indeed a dewdrop, by the sea
One met him lovelier than all men may
be,
God-featured, with god's eyes; and in
their might
Somewhat that drew men's own to mar
their sight,
Even of all eyes drawn toward him;
and his mouth
Was as the very rose of all men's youth,
One rose of all the rose-beds in the world:
But round his brows the curls were
snakes that curled,
And like his tongue a serpent's; and his
voice
Speaks death, and bids rejoice.
Yet then he spake no word, seeming as
dumb,
A dumb thing mild and hurtless; nor
at first
From his bowed eyes seemed any light
to come,
Nor his meek lips for blood or tears to
thirst:
But as one blind and mute in mild,
sweet wise,
Pleading for pity of piteous lips and
eyes,
He strayed with faint, bare, lily-lovely
feet,
Helpless, and flower-like sweet:
Nor might man see, not having word
hereof,
That this of all gods was the great god
Love.

And seeing him lovely and like a
little child
That well-nigh wept for wonder that it
smiled,
And was so feeble and fearful, with soft
speech
The youth bespake him softly; but
there fell
From the sweet lips no sweet word
audible
That ear or thought might reach;

No sound to make the dim cold silence
glad,
No breath to thaw the hard harsh air
with heat;
Only the saddest smile of all things
sweet,
Only the sweetest smile of all things
sad.

And so they went together one green
way
Till April dying made free the world
for May;
And on his guide suddenly Love's face
turned,
And in his blind eyes burned
Hard light and heat of laughter; and
like flame
That opens in a mountain's ravening
mouth
To blear and sear the sunlight from the
south,
His mute mouth opened, and his first
word came:
"Knowest thou me now by name?"
And all his stature waxed immeasur-
able,
As of one shadowing heaven and light-
ening hell;
And statelier stood he than a tower that
stands
And darkens with its darkness far-off
sands
Whereon the sky leans red;
And with a voice that stilled the winds
he said, —
"I am he that was thy lord before thy
birth,
I am he that is thy lord till thou turn
earth:
I make the night more dark, and all the
morrow
Dark as the night whose darkness was
my breath:
O fool, my name is Sorrow:
Thou fool, my name is Death."

And he that heard spake not, and
looked right on
Again, and Love was gone.

Through many a night, toward many
a wearier day,

His spirit bore his body down its way.
Through many a day, toward many a
wearier night,
His soul sustained his sorrows in her
sight.
And earth was bitter, and heaven, and
even the sea,
Sorrowful even as he.
And the wind helped not, and the sun
was dumb;
And with too long strong stress of grief
to be,
His heart grew sear and numb.

And one bright eve ere summer in
autumn sank,
At star-dawn standing on a gray sea-
bank
He felt the wind fitfully shift and
heave
As toward a stormier eve;
And all the wan wide sea shuddered;
and earth
Shook underfoot, as toward some time-
less birth,
Intolerable and inevitable; and all
Heaven, darkling, trembled like a
stricken thrall;
And far out of the quivering east, and
far
From past the moonrise and its guiding
star,
Began a noise of tempest, and a light
That was not of the lightning; and a
sound
Rang with it round and round,
That was not of the thunder; and a
flight
As of blown clouds by night,
That was not of them; and with songs
and cries
That sang and shrieked their soul out
at the skies,
A shapeless earthly storm of shapes
began
From all ways round to move in on the
man,
Clamorous against him silent; and their
feet
Were as the winds are fleet,
And their shrill songs were as wild
birds' are sweet.

And as when all the world of earth
 was wronged,
 And all the host of all men driven
 afoam
 By the red hand of Rome,
 Round some fierce amphitheatre over-
 thronged
 With fair clear faces full of bloodier
 lust
 Than swells and stings the tiger when
 his mood
 Is fieriest after blood,
 And drunk with trampling of the mur-
 derous must
 That soaks and stains the tortuous
 close-coiled wood
 Made monstrous with its myriad-mus-
 tering brood,
 Face by fair face panted and gleamed
 and pressed,
 And breast by passionate breast
 Heaved hot with ravenous rapture, as
 they quaffed
 The red ripe full fume of the deep live
 draught,
 The sharp quick reek of keen fresh
 bloodshed, blown
 Through the dense deep drift up to the
 emperor's throne
 From the under steaming sands,
 With clamor of all-applausive throats
 and hands,
 Mingling in mirthful time
 With shrill, blithe mockeries of the
 lithe-limbed mime;
 So from somewhence far forth of the
 un beholden,
 Dreadfully driven from over and after
 and under,
 Fierce, blown through fifes of brazen
 blast and golden,
 With sound of chiming waves that
 drown the thunder,
 Or thund'ring that strikes dumb the sea's
 own chimes,
 Began the bellowing of the bull-voiced
 mimes,
 Terrible; firs bowed down as briers or
 palms
 Even at the breathless blast as of a
 breeze
 Fulfilled with clamor and clangor and
 storms of psalms;

Red hands rent up the roots of old-
 world trees,
 Thick flames of torches tossed as
 tumbling seas
 Made mad the moonless and infuriate
 air
 That, ravening, revelled in the riotous
 hair
 And raiment of the furred Bassarides.

 So came all those in on him; and his
 heart,
 As out of sleep suddenly struck a-start,
 Danced, and his flesh took fire of theirs,
 and grief
 Was as a last year's leaf
 Blown dead far down the wind's way;
 and he set
 His pale mouth to the brightest mouth
 it met
 That laughed for love against his lips,
 and bade
 Follow; and in following, all his blood
 grew glad
 And as again a seabird's; for the wind
 Took him to bathe him deep round
 breast and brow;
 Not as it takes a dead leaf drained and
 thinned,
 But as the brightest bay-flower blown
 on bough,
 Set springing toward it singing: and
 they rode
 By many a vine-leaved, many a rose-
 hung road,
 Exalt with exaltation; many a night
 Set all its stars upon them as for spies
 On many a moon-bewildering mountain
 height
 Where he rode only by the fierier light
 Of his dread lady's hot, sweet hunger-
 ing eyes.
 For the moon wandered witless of her
 way,
 Spell-stricken by strong magic in such
 wise
 As wizards use to set the stars astray.
 And in his ears the music that makes
 mad
 Beat always; and what way them usic
 bade,
 That away rode he; nor was any sleep
 His, nor from height nor deep.

But heaven was as red iron, slumberless,
 And had no heart to bless;
 And earth lay sear and darkling as distraught,
 And help in her was naught.

Then many a midnight, many a morn
 and even,
 His mother, passing forth of her fair
 heaven,
 With goodlier gifts than all save gods
 can give
 From earth or from the heaven where
 sea-things live,
 With shine of sea-flowers through the
 bay-leaf braid
 Woven for a crown her foam-white
 hands had made
 To crown him with land's laurel and
 sea-dew,
 Sought the sea-bird that was her boy:
 but he
 Sat panther-throned beside Erigone,
 Riding the red ways of the revel
 through
 Midmost of pale-mouthed passion's
 crownless crew.
 Till on some winter's dawn of some
 diin year
 He let the vine-bit on the panther's lip
 Slide, and the green rein slip,
 And set his eyes to seaward, nor gave
 ear
 If sound from landward hailed him,
 dire or dear;
 And passing forth of all those fair
 fierce ranks
 Back to the gray sea banks,
 Against a sea-rock lying, aslant the
 steep,
 Fell after many sleepless dreams on
 sleep.

And in his sleep the dun green light
 was shed
 Heavily round his head
 That through the vale of sea falls fath-
 om-deep,
 Blurred like a lamp's that when the
 night drops dead
 Dies; and his eyes gat grace of sleep
 to see

The deep divine dark day-shine of the
 sea,
 Dense water-walls and clear dusk water-
 ways,
 Broad-based, or branching as a sea-
 flower sprays
 That side or this dividing; and anew
 The glory of all her glories that he
 knew.
 And in sharp rapture of recovering
 tears
 He woke on fire with yearnings of old
 years,
 Pure as one purged of pain that pas-
 sion bore,
 Ill child of bitter mother; for his own
 Looked laughing toward him from her
 mid-sea throne,
 Up toward him there ashore.

Thence in his heart the great same
 joy began,
 Of child that made him man
 And, turned again from all hearts else
 on quest,
 He communed with his own heart, and
 had rest.
 And like the sea-winds upon loud
 waters ran
 His days and dreams together, till the
 joy
 Burned in him of the boy;
 Till the earth's great comfort and the
 sweet sea's breath
 Breathed and blew life in where was
 heartless death,—
 Death spirit-stricken of soul-sick days,
 where strife
 Of thought and flesh made mock of
 death and life.
 And grace returned upon him of his
 birth
 Where heaven was mixed with heaven-
 like sea and earth;
 And song shot forth strong wings that
 took the sun
 From inward, fledged with might of
 sorrow and mirth,
 And father's fire made mortal in his son.
 Nor was not spirit of strength in blast
 and breeze
 To exalt again the sun's child and the
 sea's;

For, as wild mares in Thessaly grow
 great
 With child of ravishing winds, that vio-
 late
 Their leaping length of limb with
 manes like fire,
 And eyes outburning heaven's
 With fires more violent than the light-
 ning levin's,
 And breath drained out and desperate
 of desire,
 Even so the spirit in him, when winds
 grew strong,
 Grew great with child of song.
 Nor less than when his veins first leapt
 for joy
 To draw delight in such as burns a boy,
 Now, too, the soul of all his senses felt
 The passionate pride of deep sea-pulses
 dealt
 Through nerve and jubilant vein
 As from the love and largess of old
 time ;
 And with his heart again
 The tidal throb of all the tides keep
 rhyme,
 And charm him from his own soul's
 separate sense
 With infinite and invasive influence,
 That made strength sweet in him, and
 sweetness strong,
 Being now no more a singer, but a song.

Till one clear day, when brighter sea-
 wind blew,
 And louder sea-shine lightened, for the
 waves
 Were full of godhead and the light that
 saves,
 His father's and their spirit had pierced
 him through,
 He felt strange breath and light all
 round him shed
 That bowed him down with rapture ;
 and he knew
 His father's hand, hallowing his hum-
 bled head,
 And the old great voice of the old good
 time, that said :

" Child of my sunlight, and the sea,
 from birth
 A fosterling and fugitive on earth ;

Sleepless of soul as wind or wave or
 fire,
 A man-child with an ungrown god's
 desire ;
 Because thou hast loved not mortal
 more than me,
 Thy father, and thy mother-hearted
 sea ;
 Because thou hast set thine heart to
 sing, and sold
 Life and life's love for song, God's liv-
 ing gold ;
 Because thou hast given thy flower and
 fire of youth
 To feed men's hearts with visions truer
 than truth ;
 Because thou hast kept in those world-
 wandering eyes
 The light that makes me music of the
 skies ;
 Because thou hast heard, with world-
 unweari'd ears,
 The music that puts light into the
 spheres, —
 Have therefore in thine heart and in
 thy mouth
 The sound of song that mingles north
 and south,
 The song of all the winds that sing of
 me,
 And in thy soul the sense of all the
 sea."

HERSE.

WHEN grace is given us ever to behold
 A child some sweet months old,
 Love, laying across our lips his finger,
 saith,
 Smiling, with bated breath,
 Hush ! for the holiest thing that lives is
 here,
 And heaven's own heart how near !
 How dare we, that may gaze not on the
 sun,
 Gaze on this verier one ?
 Heart, hold thy peace ; eyes, be cast
 down for shame ;
 Lips, breathe not yet its name.
 In heaven they know what name to call
 it : we,
 How should we know ? For, see !

The adorable sweet living marvel-
 lous
 Strange light that lightens us
 Who gaze, desertless of such glorious
 grace,
 Full in a babe's warm face!
 All roses that the morning rears are
 naught,
 All stars not worth a thought,
 Set this one star against them, or sup-
 pose
 As rival this one rose.
 What price could pay with earth's
 whole weight of gold
 One least flushed roseleaf's fold
 Of all this dimpling store of smiles that
 shine
 From each warm curve and line,
 Each charm of flower-sweet flesh, to
 re-illumine
 The dappled rose-red bloom
 Of all its dainty body, honey-sweet
 Clenched hands and curled-up feet,
 That on the roses of the dawn have
 trod
 As they came down from God,
 And keep the flush and colour that the
 sky
 Takes when the sun comes nigh,
 And keep the likeness of the smile their
 grace
 Evoked on God's own face
 When, seeing this work of his most
 heavenly mood,
 He saw that it was good?
 For all its warm sweet body seems one
 smile,
 And mere men's love too vile
 To meet it, or with eyes that worship
 dims
 Read o'er the little limbs,
 Read all the book of all their beauties
 o'er,
 Rejoice, revere, adore,
 Bow down and worship each delight in
 turn,
 Laugh, wonder, yield, and yearn.
 But when our trembling kisses dare, yet
 dread,
 Even to draw nigh its head,
 And touch, and scarce with touch or
 breath surprise
 Its mild miraculous eyes

Out of their viewless vision — O, what
 then,
 What may be said of men?
 What speech may name a new-born
 child? what word
 Earth ever spake or heard?
 The best men's tongue that ever glory
 knew
 Called that a drop of dew
 Which from the breathing creature's
 kindly womb
 Came forth in blameless bloom.
 We have no word, as had those men
 most high,
 To call a baby by.
 Rose, ruby, lily, pearl of stormless
 seas —
 A better word than these,
 A better sign it was than flower or
 gem
 That love revealed to them :
 They knew that whence comes light or
 quickening flame,
 Thence only this thing came,
 And only might be likened of our love
 To somewhat born above,
 Not even to sweetest things dropped
 else on earth,
 Only to dew's own birth.
 Nor doubt we but their sense was
 heavenly true,
 Babe, when we gaze on you,
 A dew-drop out of heaven, whose colors
 are
 More bright than sun or star,
 As now, ere watching love dare fear or
 hope,
 Lips, hands, and eyelids ope,
 And all your life is mixed with earthly
 leaven.
 O child, what news from heaven ?

EIGHT YEARS OLD.

I.

SUN, whom the faltering snow-cloud
 fears,
 Rise, let the time of year be May,
 Speak now the word that April hears,
 Let March have all his royal way ;

Bid all spring raise in winter's ears
 All tunes her children hear or play,
 Because the crown of eight glad years
 On one bright head is set to-day.

II.

What matters cloud or sun to-day
 To him who wears the wreath of years
 So many, and all like flowers at play
 With wind and sunshine, while his ears
 Hear only song on every way?
 More sweet than spring triumphant
 hears
 Ring through the revel-rout of May
 Are these, the notes that winter fears.

III.

Strong-hearted winter knows and fears
 The music made of love at play,
 Or haply loves the tune he hears
 From hearts fulfilled with flowering
 May,
 Whose molten music thaws his ears
 Late frozen, deaf but yesterday
 To sounds of dying and dawning years,
 Now quickened on his deathward way.

IV.

For deathward now lies winter's way
 Down the green vestibule of years
 That each year brightens day by day
 With flower and shower till hope
 scarce fears,
 And fear grows wholly hope of May.
 But we — the music in our ears
 Made of love's pulses as they play,
 The heart alone that makes it hears.

V.

The heart it is that plays and hears
 High salutation of to-day.
 Tongue falters, hand shrinks back, song
 fears
 Its own unworthiness to play
 Fit music for those eight sweet years,
 Or sing their blithe accomplished
 way.
 No song quite worth a young child's
 ears
 Broke ever even from birds in May.

VI.

There beats not in the heart of May,
 When summer hopes and springtide
 fears,
 There falls not from the height of day,
 When sunlight speaks and silence
 hears,
 So sweet a psalm as children play
 And sing, each hour of all their years.
 Each moment of their lovely way,
 And know not how it thrills our ears.

VII.

Ah! child, what are we, that our ears
 Should hear you singing on your
 way,
 Should have this happiness? The
 years
 Whose hurrying wings about us play
 Are not like yours, whose flower-time
 fears
 Naught worse than sunlit showers in
 May,
 Being sinless as the spring, that hears
 Her own heart praise her every day.

VIII.

Yet we, too, triumph in the day
 That bare, to entrance our eyes and
 ears,
 To lighten daylight, and to play
 Such notes as darkness knows and
 fears,
 The child whose face illumines our way,
 Whose voice lifts up the heart that
 hears,
 Whose hand is as the hand of May
 To bring us flowers from eight full
 years.

FEB. 4, 1882.

"NON DOLET."

It does not hurt. She looked along the
 knife
 Smiling, and watched the thick drops
 mix and run
 Down the sheer blade: not that which
 had been done
 Could hurt the sweet sense of the
 Roman wife,

But that which was to do yet ere the
strife
Could end for each forever, and the
sun:
Nor was the palm yet nor was peace
yet won
While pain had power upon her hus-
band's life.

It does not hurt, Italia. Thou art more
Than bride to bridegroom: how shalt
thou not take
The gift love's blood has reddened
for thy sake?
Was not thy life-blood given for us
before?
And if love's heart-blood can avail
thy need,
And thou not die, how should it hurt
indeed?

LINES ON THE DEATH OF
EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY.

LAST high star of the years whose
thunder
Still men's listening remembrance
hears,
Last light left of our fathers' years,
Watched with honour and hailed with
wonder,
Thee too, then, have the years borne
under,
Thou too, then, hast regained thy
peers.
Wings that warred with the winds of
morning,
Storm-winds rocking the red great
dawn,
Close at last, and a film is drawn
Over the eyes of the storm-bird, scorn-
ing
Now no longer the loud world's warn-
ing,
Waves that threaten or waves that
tawn.
Flies were none or three left us
Flies of the sun and sea
Ed. J. Trelawny remains there here.

Knew thee: now shalt thou sleep, for
giving
All griefs past of the wild world's giv-
ing,
Moored at last on the stormless
shore.

World-wide liberty's lifelong lover,
Lover no less of the strength of
song,
Sea-king, swordsman, hater of wrong,
Over thy dust that the dust shall cover
Comes my song as a bird to hover,
Borne of its will as of wings along.

Cherished of thee were this brief song's
brothers
Now that follows them, cherishing
thee.
Over the tides and the tideless sea,
Soft as a smile of the earth our
mother's,
Flies it faster than all those others,
First of the troop at thy tomb to
be.

Memories of Greece, and the mountain's
hollow
Guarded alone of thy loyal sword,
Hold thy name for our hearts in
ward:
Yet more fair are our hearts to fol-
low
One way now with the southward swal-
low
Back to the grave of the man their
lord.

Heart of hearts, art thou moved not,
hearing
Surely, if hearts of the dead may
hear,
Whose true heart it is now draws
near?
Surely the sense of it thrills thee, cheer-
ing
Darkness and death with the news new
that
Ed. J. Trelawny remains there here.

OFF SHORE.

WHEN the might of the summer
Is most on the sea;
When the days overcome her
With joy but to be,
With rapture of royal enchantment, and
sorcery that sets her not free, —

But for hours upon hours
As a thrall she remains
Spell-bound as with flowers,
And content in their chains,
And her loud steeds fret not, and lift not
a lock of their deep white manes;

Then only, far under
In the depths of her hold,
Some gleam of its wonder
Man's eye may behold,
Its wild weed forests of crimson and
russet and olive and gold.

Still deeper and dimmer
And goodlier they glow
For the eyes of the swimmer
Who scans them below
As he crosses the zone of their flower-
age that knows not of sunshine
and snow.

Soft blossomless frondage
And foliage that gleams
As to prisoners in bondage
The light of their dreams,
The desire of a dawn unbeholden, with
hope on the wings of its beams.

Not as prisoners entombed,
Waxen haggard and wizen,
But consoled and illumed
In the depths of their prison
With delight of the light everlasting,
and vision of dawn on them
risen, —

From the banks and the beds
Of the waters divine,
They lift up their heads,
And the flowers of them shine
Through the splendor of darkness that
clothes them, of water that glim-
mers like wine.

Bright bank over bank
Making glorious the gloom,
Soft rank upon rank,
Strange bloom after bloom,
They kindle the liquid low twilight, the
dusk of the dim sea's womb.

Through the subtle and tangible
Gloom without form,
Their branches, infrangible
Even of storm,
Spread softer their sprays than the
shoots of the woodland when
April is warm.

As the flight of the thunder, full
Charged with its word,
Dividing the wonderful
Depths like a bird,
Speaks wrath and delight to the heart
of the night that exults to have
heard, —

So swiftly, though soundless
In silence's ear,
Light, winged from the boundless
Blue depths full of cheer,
Speaks joy to the heart of the waters
that part not before him, but hear.

Light perfect and visible,
Godhead of God,
God indivisible,
Lifts but his rod,
And the shadows are scattered in sun-
der, and darkness is light at his
nod.

At the touch of his wand,
At the nod of his head
From the spaces beyond
Where the dawn hath her bed,
Earth, water, and air are transfigured,
and rise as one risen from the
dead.

He puts forth his hand,
And the mountains are thrilled
To the heart, as they stand
In his presence, fulfilled
With his glory that utters his grace
upon earth, and her sorrows are
stilled.

The moan of her travail
That groans for the light
Till dayspring unravel
The weft of the night,
At the sound of the strings of the
music of morning, falls dumb
with delight.

He gives forth his word,
And the word that he saith,
Ere well it be heard,
Strikes darkness to death;
For the thought of his heart is the sun-
rise, and dawn as the sound of
his breath.

And the strength of its pulses,
That passion makes proud,
Confounds and convulses
The depths of the cloud
Of the darkness that heaven was ingirt
with, divided and rent as a
shroud, —

As the veil of the shrine
Of the temple of old,
When darkness divine
Over noonday was rolled;
So the heart of the night by the pulse
of the light is convulsed and
controlled.

And the sea's heart, groaning
For glories withdrawn,
And the waves' mouths, moaning
All night for the dawn,
Are uplift as the hearts and the mouths
of the singers onlea-side and lawn.

And the sound of the quiring
Of all these as one,
Desired and desiring
Till dawn's will be done,
Fills full with delight of them heaven
till it burns as the heart of the
sun;

Till the waves, too, inherit,
And waters take part
In the sense of the spirit
That breathes from his heart,
And are kindled with music, as fire when
the lips of the morning part, —

With music unheard
In the light of her lips,
In the life-giving word
Of the dewfall that drips
On the grasses of earth, and the wind
that enkindles the wings of the
ships.

White glories of wings
As of seafaring birds,
That flock from the springs
Of the sunrise in herds,
With the wind for a herdsman, and
hasten or halt at the change of
his words;

As the watchwords change,
When the wind's note shifts,
And the skies grow strange,
And the white squall drifts
Up sharp from the sea-line, vexing the
sea till the low cloud lifts.

At the charge of his word
Bidding pause, bidding haste,
When the ranks are stirred
And the lines displaced,
They scatter as wild swans, parting
adrift on the wan green waste.

At the hush of his word,
In a pause of his breath
When the waters have heard
His will that he saith,
They stand as a flock penned close in
its fold for division of death.

As a flock by division
Of death to be thinned,
As the shades in a vision
Of spirits that sinned;
So glimmer their shrouds and their
sheetings as clouds on the stream
of the wind.

But the sun stands fast,
And the sea burns bright,
And the flight of them past
Is no more than the flight
Of the snow-soft swarm of serene wings
poised and afloat in the light.

Like flowers upon flowers,
 In a festival way,
 When hours after hours
 Shed grace on the day,
 White blossom-like butterflies hover
 and gleam through the snows of
 the spray.

Like snow-colored petals
 Of blossoms that flee
 From storm that unsettles
 The flowers as the tree,
 They flutter, a legion of flowers on the
 wing, through the field of the sea.

Through the furrowless field
 Where the foam-blossoms blow,
 And the secrets are sealed
 Of their harvest below,
 They float in the path of the sunbeams,
 as flakes or as blossoms of snow.

Till the sea's ways darken,
 And the god, withdrawn,
 Give ear not, or hearken
 If prayer on him fawn,
 And the sun's self seem but a shadow,
 the noon as a ghost of the dawn.

No shadow, but rather,
 God, father of song,
 Shew grace to me, Father
 God, loved of me long,
 That I lose not the light of thy face,
 that my trust in thee work me
 not wrong, —

While yet I make forward
 With face toward thee,
 Not turned yet in shoreward,
 Be thine upon me;
 Be thy light on my forehead, or ever I
 turn it again from the sea.

As a kiss on my brow
 Be the light of thy grace,
 Be thy glance on me now
 From the pride of thy place:
 As the sign of a sire to a son, be the
 light on my face of thy face.

Thou wast father of olden
 Times hailed and adored.

And the sense of thy golden
 Great harp's monochord
 Was the joy in the soul of the singers
 that hailed thee for master and
 lord.

Fair father of all
 In thy ways that have trod,
 That have risen at thy call,
 That have thrilled at thy nod,
 Arise, shine, lighten upon me, O sun!
 that we see to be God.

As my soul has been dutiful
 Only to thee,
 O God! most beautiful,
 Lighten thou me,
 As I swim through the dim long rollers,
 with eyelids uplift from the sea.

Be praised and adored of us,
 All in accord,
 Father and lord of us
 Always adored,
 The slayer, and the stayer, and the
 harper, the light of us all, and
 our lord.

At the sound of thy lyre,
 At the touch of thy rod,
 Air quickens to fire
 By the foot of thee trod,
 The savior, and healer, and singer,
 the living and visible God.

The years are before thee
 As shadows of thee,
 As men that adore thee,
 As cloudlets that flee:
 But thou art the God, and thy kingdom is
 heaven, and thy shrine is the sea.

EVENING ON THE BROADS.

OVER two shadowless waters, adrift as
 a pinnace in peril,
 Hangs as in heavy suspense, charged
 with irresolute light,
 Softly the soul of the sunset upholden
 awhile on the sterile
 Waves and wastes of the land, half
 repossessed by the night.

Inland glimmer the shallows asleep,
and afar in the breathless

Twilight: yonder the depths darken
afar and asleep.

Slowly the semblance of death out of
heaven descends on the deathless

Waters: hardly the light lives on the
face of the deep, —

— Hardly, but here for a while. All
over the gray soft shallow

l. 10 — Hover the colors and clouds of the
twilight, void of a star.

As a bird unfledged is the broad-winged
night, whose winglets are cal-
low

l. 12 — Yet, but soon with their plumes will
she cover her brood from afar, —

Cover the brood of her worlds that cum-
ber the skies with their blossom,

Thick as the darkness of leaf-shad-
owed spring is encumbered with
flowers.

World upon world is enwound in the
bountiful girth of her bosom,

Warm and lustrous with life lovely
to look on as ours.

Still is the sunset adrift as a spirit in
doubt that dissembles

Still with itself, being sick of division,
and dimmed by dismay —

Nay, not so; but with love and delight
beyond passion it trembles,

Fearful and fain of the night, lovely
with love of the day:

Fain and fearful of rest that is like unto
death, and begotten

Out of the womb of the tomb, born
of the seed of the grave:

Lovely with shadows of loves that are
only not wholly forgotten,

Only not wholly suppressed by the
dark, as a wreck by the wave.

Still there linger the loves of the morn-
ing and noon, in a vision

Blindly beheld, but in vain; ghosts
that are tired, and would rest.

But the glories beloved of the night
rise all too dense for division,

Deep in the depth of her breast shel-
tered as doves in a nest.

Fainter the beams of the loves of the
daylight season enkindled

Wane, and the memories of hours
that were fair with the love of
them fade;

Loftier, aloft of the lights of the sunset
stricken and dwindled,

Gather the signs of the love at the
heart of the night new-made.

New-made night, new-born of the sun-
set, immeasurable, endless,

Opens the secret of love hid from of
old in her heart, —

In the deep sweet heart full-charged
with faultless love of the friend-
less

Spirits of men that are eased when
the wheels of the sun depart.

Still is the sunset afloat as a ship on
the waters upholden

Full-sailed, wide-winged, poised softly
forever a-sway —

Nay, not so, but at least for a little,
a while at the golden

Limit of arching air fain for an hour
to delay.

Here on the bar of the sand-bank,
steep yet aslope to the gleaming

Waste of the water without, waste
of the water within,

Lights overhead and lights underneath
seen doubtfully dreaming

Whether the day be done, whether
the night may begin.

Far and afar and farther again, they
falter and hover,

Warm on the water, and deep in the
sky, and pale on the cloud:

Colder again, and slowly remoter, afraid
to recover

Breath, yet fain to revive, as it seems,
from the skirt of the shroud.

Faintly the heart-beats shorten and
pause of the light in the west-
ward

Heaven, as eastward quicken the
paces of star upon star

Hurried and eager of life as a child
that strains to the breast-ward

Eagerly, yearning forth of the deeps
where the ways of them are,

Glad of the glory of the gift of their
life and the wealth of its wonder,

Fain of the night, and the sea, and
the sweet wan face of the earth.

Over them air grows deeper, intense
 with delight in them : under
 Things are thrilled in their sleep, as
 with sense of a sure new birth.
 But here by the sand-bank watching,
 with eyes on the sea-line, stranger
 Grows to me also the weight of the
 sea-ridge gazed on of me,
 Heavily heaped up, changefully change-
 less, void though of danger,
 Void not of menace, but full of the
 might of the dense dull sea.
 Like as the wave is before me, behind
 is the bank deep-drifted ;
 Yellow and thick as the bank is be-
 hind me, in front is the wave.
 As the wall of a prison imprisoning the
 mere, is the girth of it lifted ;
 But the rampire of water in front is
 erect as the wall of a grave.
 And the crests of it crumble and topple
 and change, but the wall is not
 broken :
 Standing still dry-shod, I see it as
 higher than my head,
 Moving inland always again, reared up
 as in token
 Still of impending wrath still in the
 foam of it shed.
 And even in the pauses between them,
 dividing the rollers in sunder,
 High overhead seems ever the sea-
 line fixed as a mark ;
 And the shore where I stand, as a val-
 ley beholden of hills whence
 thunder
 Cloud and torrent and storm, dark-
 ening the depths of the dark.
 Up to the sea, not upon it or over it,
 upward from under
 Seems he to gaze, whose eyes yearn
 after it here from the shore ;
 A wall of turbid water, a-slope to the
 wide sky's wonder
 Of color and cloud, it climbs, or
 spreads as a slanted floor.
 And the large lights change on the face
 of the mere, like things that were
 living,
 Winged and wonderful, beams like
 as birds are that pass and are free ;
 But the light is dense as darkness, a
 gift withheld in the giving,

That lies as dead on the fierce dull
 face of the landward sea.
 Stained and stifled and soiled, made
 earthlier than earth is and duller,
 Grimly she puts back light as re-
 jected, a thing put away :
 No transparent rapture, a molten music
 of color ;
 No translucent love taken and given
 of the day.
 Fettered and marred and begrimed, is
 the light's live self on her falling,
 As the light of a man's life lighted
 the fume of a dungeon mars :
 Only she knows of the wind, when her
 wrath gives ear to him calling ;
 The delight of the light she knows
 not, nor answers the sun or the
 stars.
 Love she hath none to return for the
 luminous love of their giving :
 None to reflect from the bitter and
 shallow response of her heart.
 Yearly she feeds on her dead, vet her-
 self seems dead and not living,
 Or confused as a soul heavy-laden
 with trouble that will not depart.
 In the sound of her speech to the dark-
 ness the moan of her evil remorse
 is,
 Haply, for strong ships gnawed by
 the dog-toothed sea-bank's fang,
 And trampled to death by the rage of
 the feet of her foam-lipped horses,
 Whose manes are yellow as plague,
 and as ensigns of pestilence hang,
 That wave in the foul faint air of the
 breath of a death-stricken city ;
 So menacing heaves she the manes of
 her rollers knotted with sand,
 Discolored, opaque, suspended in sign
 as of strength without pity,
 That shake with flameless thunder
 the low long length of the strand.
 Here, far off in the farther extreme of
 the shore as it lengthens
 Northward, lonely for miles, ere ever
 a village begin,
 On the lapsing land that recedes as
 the growth of the strong sea
 strengths
 Shoreward, thrusting further and fur-
 ther its outworks in,

Here in Shakespeare's vision, a flower
of her kin forsaken,

Lay in her golden raiment alone on
the wild wave's edge,
Surely by no shore else, but here on
the bank storm-shaken,

Perdita, bright as a dewdrop engilt
of the sun on the sedge.

Here on a shore unbeheld of his eyes,
in a dream, he beheld her

Outcast, fair as a fairy, the child of a
far-off king;

And over the babe-flower gently the
head of a pastoral elder

Bowed, compassionate, hoar as the
hawthorn-blossom in spring,

And kind as harvest in autumn: a
shelter of shade on the lonely

Shelterless unknown shore, scourged
of implacable waves:

Here, where the wind walks royal,
alone in his kingdom, and only

Sounds to the sedges a wail as of
triumph that conquers and
craves.

All these waters and wastes are his
empire of old, and awaken

From barren and stagnant slumber
at only the sound of his breath:

Yet the hunger is eased not that aches
in his heart, nor the goal over-
taken

That his wide wings yearn for, and
labor as hearts that yearn after
death.

All the solitude sighs and expects with
a blind expectation

Somewhat unknown of its own sad
heart, grown heart-sick of strife:

Till sometime its wild heart maddens,
and moans, and the vast ulula-
tion

Takes wing with the clouds on the
waters, and wails to be quit of
its life.

For the spirit and soul of the waste is
the wind, and his wings with
their waving

Darken and lighten the darkness and
light of it thickened or thinned,

But the heart that impels them is even
as a conqueror's insatiably crav-
ing

That victory can fill not, as power can
not satiate the want of the wind

All these moorlands and marshes are
full of his might, and oppose not
Aught of defence nor of barrier, of
forest or precipice piled;

But the will of the wind works ever as
his that desires what he knows
not,

And the wail of his want unfulfilled is
as one making moan for her child.

And the cry of his triumph is even as
the crying of hunger that mad-
dens

The heart of a strong man, aching in
vain as the wind's heart aches;

And the sadness itself of the land for
its infinite solitude saddens

More for the sound than the silence
athirst for the sound that slakes.

And the sunset at last, and the twilight
are dead; and the darkness is
breathless

With fear of the wind's breath ris-
ing that seems and seems not to
sleep;

But a sense of the sound of it *always*, a
spirit unsleeping and deathless,

Ghost or god, evermore moves on
the face of the deep.

THE EMPEROR'S PROGRESS.

A STUDY IN THREE STAGES.

(On the Busts of Nero in the Uffizj.)

A CHILD of brighter than the morning's
birth,

And lovelier than all smiles that may
be smiled

Save only of little children undefiled,
Sweet, perfect, witless of their own
dear worth,

Live rose of love, mute melody of
mirth,

Glad as a bird is when the woods are
mild,

Adorable as is nothing save a child,
Hails with wide eyes and lips his life
on earth,

His lovely life with all its heaven to be.
 And whoso reads the name inscribed,
 or hears,
 Feels his own heart a frozen well of
 tears,
 Child, for deep dread and fearful pity
 of thee
 Whom God would not let rather die
 than see
 The incumbent horror of impending
 years.

II.

Man, that wast godlike being a child,
 and now,
 No less than kinglike, art no more in
 sooth
 For all thy grace and lordliness of
 youth,
 The crown that bids men's branded
 foreheads bow,
 Much more has branded and bowed
 down thy brow,
 And gnawn upon it as with fire or
 tooth
 Of steel or snake so sorely, that the
 truth
 Seems here to bear false witness. Is it
 thou,
 Child? and is all the summer of all thy
 spring
 This? are the smiles that drew men's
 kisses down
 All faded and transfigured to the
 frown
 That grieves thy face? Art thou this
 weary thing?
 Then is no slave's load heavier than
 a crown,
 And such a thrall no bondman as a
 king.

III.

Misery beyond all men's most miser-
 able,
 Absolute, whole, defiant of defence,
 Inevitable, inexplicable, intense,
 More vast than heaven is high, more
 deep than hell,
 Past cure or charm of solace or of
 spell,

Possesses and pervades the spirit
 and sense
 Whereto the expanse of the earth
 pays tribute; whence
 Breeds evil only, and broods on fumes
 that swell
 Rank from the blood of brother and
 mother and wife.
 "Misery of miseries, all is misery,"
 saith
 The heavy fair-faced hateful head, at
 strife
 With its own lusts that burn with
 feverous breath,
 Lips which the loathsome bitterness of
 life
 Leaves fearful of the bitterness of
 death.

SIX YEARS OLD.

To H. W. M.

BETWEEN the springs of six and seven,
 Two fresh years' fountains, clear
 Of all but golden sand for leaven,
 Child, midway passing here,
 As earth for love's sake dares bless
 heaven,
 So dare I bless you, dear.

Between two bright well-heads, that
 brighten
 With every breath that blows
 Too loud to lull, too low to frighten,
 But fain to rock, the rose,
 Your feet stand fast, your lit smiles
 lighten,
 That might rear flowers from snows.

You came when winds unleashed were
 snarling
 Behind the frost-bound hours,
 A snow-bird sturdier than the star-
 ling,
 A storm-bird fledged for showers,
 That spring might smile to find you,
 darling,
 First-born of all the flowers.

Could love make worthy things of
worthless,

My song were worth an ear :
Its note should make the days most
mirthless

The merriest of the year,
And wake to birth all buds yet birth-
less,

To keep your birthday, dear.

But where your birthday brightens
heaven

No need has earth, God knows,
Of light or warmth to melt or leaven
The frost or fog that glows
With sevenfold heavenly lights of seven
Sweet springs that cleave the snows.

Could love make worthy music of you,
And match my Master's powers,
Had even my love less heart to love
you,

A better song were ours ;
With all the rhymes like stars above
you,

And all the words like flowers.

SEPT. 30, 1880.

A PARTING SONG.

(To a friend leaving England for a year's
residence in Australia.)

THESE winds and suns of spring,
That warm with breath and wing
The trembling sleep of earth, till half
awake

She laughs and blushes ere her slum-
ber break,

For all good gifts they bring
Require one better thing,
For all the loans of joy they lend us,
borrow

One sharper dole of sorrow,
To sunder soon by half a world of sea
Her son from England, and my friend
from me.

Nor hope nor love nor fear
May speed or stay one year,

Nor song nor prayer may bid, as mine
would fain,

The seasons perish and be born again,
Restoring all we lend,
Reluctant, of a friend, —

The voice, the hand, the presence, and
the sight,

That lend their life and light
To present gladness and heart-strength-
ening cheer,

Now lent again for one reluctant year.

So much we lend indeed,
Perforce, by force of need,
So much we must; even these things
and no more,

The far sea sundering and the sundered
shore

A world apart from ours,
So much the imperious hours ;
Exact, and spare not; but no more
than these

All earth and all her seas
From thought and faith of trust and
truth can borrow,

Not memory from desire, nor hope
from sorrow.

Through bright and dark and bright
Returns of day and night
I bid the swift year speed, and change
and give

His breath of life to make the next
year live

With sunnier suns for us,
A life more prosperous,
And laugh with flowers more fragrant,
that shall see

A merrier March for me,
A rosier-girdled race of night with
day,
A goodlier April, and a tenderer May.

For him the inverted year
Shall mark our seasons here
With alien alternation, and revive
This withered winter, slaying the spring
alive

With darts more sharply drawn
As nearer draws the dawn,
In heaven transfigured over earth trans-
formed,

And with our winters warmed

And wasted with our summers, till the
beams
Rise on his face that rose on Dante's
dreams.

Till fourfold morning rise
Of star-shine on his eyes,
Dawn of the spheres that brand steep
heaven across
At height of night with semblance of a
cross
Whose grace and ghostly glory
Poured heaven on purgatory,
Seeing with their flamelets risen all
heaven grow glad
For love thereof it had
And lovely joy of loving; so may
these
Make bright with welcome now their
southern seas.

O happy stars, whose mirth
The saddest soul on earth
That ever soared and sang, found
strong to bless,
Lightening his life's harsh load of heavi-
ness
With comfort sown like seed
In dreams though not in deed,
On sprinkled wastes of darkling thought
divine!
Let all your lights now shine
With all as glorious gladness on his
eyes
For whom indeed, and not in dream,
they rise.

As those great twins of air
Hailed once with old-world prayer
Of all folk alway faring forth by sea,
So now may these for grace and guid-
ance be,
To guard his sail, and bring
Again to brighten spring
The face we look for, and the hand we
lack
Still, till they light him back,
As welcome as to first discovering eyes
Their light rose ever, soon on his to
rise.

As parting now he goes
From snow-time back to snows,

So back to spring from summer may
next year
Restore him, and our hearts receive
him here, —
The best good gift that spring
Had ever grace to bring
At fortune's happiest hour of star-blest
birth,
Back to love's home-bright earth,
To eyes with eyes that commune, hand
with hand,
And the old warm bosom of all our
mother-land.

Earth and sea-wind and sea
And stars and sunlight be
Alike all prosperous for him, and all
hours
Have all one heart, and all that heart
as ours.
All things as good as strange,
Crown all the seasons' change
With changing flower and compensat-
ing fruit
From one year's ripening root;
Till next year bring us, roused at
spring's recall,
A heartier flower and goodlier fruit
than all.

MARCH 26, 1880.

BY THE NORTH SEA.

I.

I.

A LAND that is lonelier than ruin;
A sea that is stranger than death;
Far fields that a rose never blew
in,
Wan waste where the winds lack
breath;
Waste endless and boundless, and
flowerless
But of marsh-blossoms fruitless as
free;
Where earth lies exhausted, as power-
less
To strive with the sea.

2.

Far flickers the flight of the swallows,
 Far flutters the weft of the grass
 Spun dense over desolate hollows,
 More pale than the clouds as they
 pass ;
 Thick woven as the web of a witch is
 Round the heart of a thrall that hath
 sinned,
 Whose youth and the wrecks of its
 riches
 Are waifs on the wind.

3.

The pastures are herdless and sheep-
 less,
 No pasture or shelter for herds :
 The wind is relentless and sleepless,
 And restless and songless the birds ;
 Their cries from afar fall breathless,
 Their wings are as lightnings that
 flee ;
 For the land has two lords that are
 deathless, —
 Death's self, and the sea.

4.

These twain, as a king with his fellow,
 Hold converse of desolate speech ;
 And her waters are haggard and yellow
 And crass with the scurf of the beach ;
 And his garments are gray as the hoary
 Wan sky where the day lies dim ;
 And his power is to her, and his glory,
 As hers unto him.

5.

In the pride of his power she rejoices,
 In her glory he glows and is glad :
 In her darkness the sound of his voice
 is,
 With his breath she dilates, and is
 mad :
 " If thou slay me, O death, and outlive
 me,
 Yet thy love hath fulfilled me of
 thee."
 " Shall I give thee not back if thou give
 me,
 O sister, O sea ?"

6.

And year upon year dawns living,
 And age upon age drops dead :
 And his hand is not weary of giving,
 And the thirst of her heart is not
 fed :
 And the hunger that moans in her pas-
 sion,
 And the rage in her hunger that
 roars,
 As a wolf's that the winter lays lash on,
 Still calls and implores.

7.

Her walls have no granite for girder,
 No fortalice fronting her stands ;
 But reefs the bloodguiltiest of murder
 Are less than the banks of her sands :
 These number their slain by the thou-
 sand ;
 For the ship hath no surety to be,
 When the bank is abreast of her bows,
 and
 Aflush with the sea.

8.

No surety to stand, and no shelter
 To dawn out of darkness but one,
 Out of waters that hurtle and welter,
 No succor to dawn with the sun
 But a rest from the wind as it passes,
 Where, hardly redeemed from the
 waves,
 Lie thick as the blades of the grasses
 The dead in their graves.

9.

A multitude noteless of numbers,
 As wild weeds cast on an heap
 And sounder than sleep are their slum-
 bers,
 And softer than song is their sleep ;
 And sweeter than all things, and stran-
 ger
 The sense, if perchance it may be,
 That the wind is divested of danger,
 And scatheless the sea ;

10.

That the roar of the banks they breasted
 Is hurtless as bellowing of herds,

And the strength of his wings that invested

The wind, as the strength of a bird's :
As the sea-mew's might or the swallow's

That cry to him back if he cries,
As over the graves and their hollows
Days darken and rise.

11.

As the souls of the dead men disburdened

And clean of the sins that they sinned,
With a lovelier than man's 'life guerdoned,

And delight as a wave's in the wind,
And delight as the wind's in the billow,
Birds pass, and deride with their glee
The flesh that has dust for its pillow
As wrecks have the sea.

12.

When the ways of the sun wax dimmer,

Wings flash through the dusk like beams;

As the clouds in the lit sky glimmer,
The bird in the graveyard gleams;
As the cloud at its wing's edge whitens
When the clarions of sunrise are heard,

The graves that the bird's note brightens
Grow bright for the bird.

13.

As the waves of the numberless waters
That the wind cannot number who guides,

Are the sons of the shore and the daughters

Here lulled by the chime of the tides;

And here in the press of them standing
We know not if these or if we
Live truest, — or anchored to landing,
Or drifted to sea.

14.

In the valley he named of decision,
No denser were multitudes met

When the soul of the seer in her vision
Saw nations for doom of them set;

Saw darkness in dawn, and the splendor

Of judgment, the sword and the rod :
But the doom here of death is more tender,

And gentler the god.

15.

And gentler the wind from the dreary
Sea-banks by the waves overlapped,
Being weary, speaks peace to the weary,
From slopes that the tide-stream hath sapped;

And sweeter than all that we call so
The seal of their slumber shall be
Till the graves that embosom them also
Be sapped of the sea.

II.

1.

For the heart of the waters is cruel,
And the kisses are dire of their lips,
And their waves are as fire is to fuel
To the strength of the seafaring ships,

Though the sea's eye gleam as a jewel
To the sun's eye back as he dips.

2.

Though the sun's eye flash to the sea's
Live light of delight and of laughter,
And her lips breathe back to the breeze
The kiss that the wind's lips waft her

From the sun that subsides, and sees
No gleam of the storm's dawn after

3.

And the wastes of the wild sea-marches
Where the borderers are matched in
their might —

Bleak fens that the sun's weight parches,
Dense waves that reject his light —
Change under the change-colored
arches

Of changeless morning and night.

4

The waves are as ranks enrolled
 Too close for the storm to sever :
 The fens lie naked and cold,
 But their heart fails utterly never :
 The lists are set from of old,
 And the warfare endureth forever.

III.

1.

Miles and miles and miles of desolation !
 Leagues on leagues on leagues without a change !
 Sign or token of some eldest nation
 Here would make the strange land not so strange.
 Time-forgotten, yea since time's creation,
 Seem these borders where the sea-birds range.

2.

Slowly, gladly, full of peace and wonder
 Grows his heart who journeys here alone :
 Earth and all its thoughts of earth sink under
 Deep as deep in water sinks a stone ;
 Hardly knows it if the rollers thunder,
 Hardly whence the lonely wind is blown.

3.

Tall the plumage of the rush-flower tosses ;
 Sharp and soft in many a curve and line,
 Gleam and glow the sea-colored marsh-mosses,
 Salt and splendid from the circling brine ;
 Streak on streak of glimmering sea-shine crosses
 All the land sea-saturate as with wine.

4

Far, and far between, in divers orders,
 Clear gray steeples cleave the low gray sky ;
 Fast and firm as time-urshaken warders,
 Hearts made sure by faith, by hope made high.
 These alone in all the wild sea-borders
 Fear no blast of days and nights that die.

5

All the land is like as one man's face is,
 Pale and troubled still with change of cares.
 Doubt and death pervade her clouded spaces ;
 Strength and length of life and peace are theirs, —
 Theirs alone amid these weary places,
 Seeing not how the wild world frets and fares.

6.

Firm and fast where all is cloud that changes,
 Cloud-clogged sunlight, cloud by sunlight thinned,
 Stern and sweet, above the sand-hill ranges
 Watch the towers and tombs of men that sinned
 Once, now calm as earth, whose only change is
 Wind, and light, and wind, and cloud, and wind.

7.

Out and in and out the sharp straits wander,
 In and out and in the wild way strives,
 Starred and paved and lined with flowers that squander
 Gold as golden as the gold of hives,
 Salt and moist and multifiform ; but yonder,
 See, what sign of life or death survives ?

8.

Seen then only when the songs of olden
Harps were young, whose echoes yet
endure,
Hymned of Homer when his years
were golden,
Known of only when the world was
pure,
Here is Hades, manifest, beholden,
Surely, surely here, if aught be sure!

9.

Where the border-line was crossed,
that, sundering
Death from life, keeps weariness from
rest,
None can tell, who fares here forward
wondering;
None may doubt but here might end
his quest.
Here life's lightning joys and woes
once thundering
Sea-like round him cease like storm
suppressed.

10.

Here the wise wave-wandering stead-
fast-hearted
Guest of many a lord, of many a
land,
Saw the shape or shade of years de-
parted,
Saw the semblance risen and hard at
hand,
Saw the mother long from love's reach
parted,
Anticleia, like a statue stand.

11.

Statue? nay, nor tissued image woven
Fair on hangings in his father's hall;
Nay, too fast her faith of heart was
proven,
Far too firm her loveliest love of all;
Love wherethrough the loving heart
was cloven,
Love that hears not when the loud
Fates call.

12.

Love that lives and stands up re-created
Then when life has ebbd and an-
guish fled;
Love more strong than death or all
things fated,
Child's and mother's, lit by love and
led;
Love that found what life so long
awaited
Here, when life came down among
the dead.

13.

Here, where never came alive another,
Came her son across the sundering
tide
Crossed before by many a warrior
brother
Once that warred on Ilion at his side;
Here spread forth vain hands to clasp
the mother
Dead, that sorrowing for his love's
sake died.

14.

Parted, though by narrowest of divis-
ions,
Clasp he might not, only might im-
plore,
Sundered yet by bitterest of derisions,
Son, and mother from the son she
bore —
Here? But all dispeopled here of vis-
ions
Lies, forlorn of shadows even, the
shore.

15.

All too sweet such men's Hellenic
speech is,
All too faint they lived of light to see,
Once to see the darkness of these
beaches,
Once to sing this Hades found of
me,
Ghostless, all its gulfs and creeks and
reaches,
Sky, and shore, and cloud, and waste,
and sea,

IV.

1.

But aloft and afront of me faring
 Far forward as folk in a dream
 That strive, between doubting and dar-
 ing,
 Right on till the goal for them gleam,
 Full forth till their goal on them
 lighten,
 The harbor where fain they would
 be,
 What headlands there darken and
 brighten?
 What change in the sea?

2.

What houses and woodlands that nes-
 tle
 Safe inland to lee of the hill
 As it slopes from the headlands that
 wrestle
 And succumb to the strong sea's
 will?
 Truce is not, nor respite, nor pity;
 For the battle is waged not of hands,
 Where over the grave of a city
 The ghost of it stands.

3.

Where the wings of the sea-wind
 slacken,
 Green lawns to the landward thrive,
 Fields brighten and pine-woods black-
 en,
 And the heat in their heart is alive;
 They blossom and warble and mur-
 mur,
 For the sense of their spirit is free:
 But harder to shoreward and firmer
 The grasp of the sea.

4.

Like ashes the low cliffs crumble,
 The banks drop down into dust,
 The heights of the hills are made hum-
 ble,
 As a reed's is the strength of their
 trust;

As a city's that armies environ,
 The strength of their stay is of sand:
 But the grasp of the sea is as iron,
 Laid hard on the land.

5.

A land that is thirstier than ruin;
 A sea that is hungrier than death;
 Heaped hills that a tree never grew in;
 Wide sands where the wave draws
 breath;
 All solace is here for the spirit
 That ever forever may be
 For the soul of thy son to inherit,
 My mother, my sea.

6.

O delight of the headlands and beaches!
 O desire of the wind on the wold,
 More glad than a man's when it reaches
 That end which it sought from of
 old,
 And the palm of possession is dreary
 To the sense that in search of it
 sinned;
 But nor satisfied ever nor weary
 Is ever the wind.

7.

The delight that he takes but in living
 Is more than of all things that live;
 For the world that has all things for
 giving
 Has nothing so goodly to give:
 But more than delight his desire is,
 For the goal where his pinions would
 be
 Is immortal as air or as fire is,
 Immense as the sea.

8.

Though hence come the moan that he
 borrows
 From darkness and depths of the
 night,
 Though hence be the spring of his
 sorrows,
 Hence too is the joy of his might,—
 The delight that his doom is forever
 To seek, and desire, and rejoice,
 And the sense that eternity never
 Shall silence his voice;

9.

That satiety never may stifle,
 Nor weariness ever estrange,
 Nor time be so strong as to rife,
 Nor change be so great as to change
 His gift that renews in the giving,
 The joy that exalts him to be
 Alone of all elements living
 The lord of the sea.

10.

What is fire, that its flame should consume her?
 More fierce than all fires are her waves.
 What is earth, that its gulfs should entomb her?
 More deep are her own than their graves.
 Life shrinks from his pinions that cover
 The darkness by thunders bedinned;
 But she knows him, her lord and her lover,
 The godhead of wind.

11.

For a season his wings are about her,
 His breath on her lips for a space;
 Such rapture he wins not without her
 In the width of his world-wide race.
 Though the forests bow down, and the mountains
 Wax dark, and the tribes of them flee,
 His delight is more deep in the fountains
 And springs of the sea.

12.

There are those too of mortals that love him,
 There are souls that desire and require,
 Be the glories of midnight above him,
 Or beneath him the daysprings of fire;
 And their hearts are as harps that approve him
 And praise him as chords of a lyre
 That were fain with their music to move him
 To meet their desire.

13.

To descend through the darkness to grace them,
 Till darkness were lovelier than light:
 To encompass and grasp and embrace them,
 Till their weakness were one with his might;
 With the strength of his wings to caress them,
 With the blast of his breath to set free;
 With the mouths of his thunders to bless them
 For sons of the sea.

14.

For these have the toil and the guerdon
 That the wind has eternally: these
 Have part in the boon and the burden
 Of the sleepless, unsatisfied breeze,
 That finds not, but seeking rejoices
 That possession can work him no wrong;
 And the voice at the heart of their voice is
 The sense of his song.

15.

For the wind's is their doom and their blessing;
 To desire, and have always above
 A possession beyond their possessing,
 A love beyond reach of their love.
 Green earth has her sons and her daughters,
 And these have their guerdons; but we
 Are the wind's, and the sun's, and the water's,
 Elect of the sea.

V.

I.

For the sea too seeks and rejoices,
 Gains and loses and gains,
 And the joy of her heart's own choice is
 As ours, and as ours are her pains:

As the thoughts of our hearts are her
voices,
And as hers is the pulse of our
veins.

2.

Her fields that know not of dearth,
Nor lie for their fruit's sake fallow,
Laugh large in the depth of their mirth;
But inshore here in the shallow,
Embroiled with encumbrance of earth,
Their skirts are turbid and yellow.

3.

The grime of her greed is upon her,
The sign of her deed is her soil;
As the earth's is her own dishonor,
And corruption the crown of her
toil:
She hath spoiled and devoured, and
her honour
Is this, to be shamed by her spoil.

4.

But afar where pollution is none,
Nor ensign of strife nor endeavor,
Where her heart and the sun's are one,
And the soil of her sin comes never,
She is pure as the wind and the sun,
And her sweetness endureth forever.

VI.

1.

Death, and change, and darkness ever-
lasting,
Deaf that hears not what the day-
star saith,
Blind past all remembrance and fore-
casting,
Dead past memory that it once drew
breath,—
These, above the washing tides and
wasting,
Reign, and rule this land of utter
death.

2.

Change of change, darkness of dark-
ness, hidden,
Very death of very death, begun

When none knows,— the knowledge is
forbidden,—

Self-begotten, self-proceeding, one
Born, not made— abhorred, unchained,
unchidden,
Night stands here defiant of the sun.

3.

Change of change, and death of death
begotten,
Darkness born of darkness, one and
three,
Ghostly godhead of a world forgotten,
Crowned with heaven, enthroned on
land and sea,
Here, where earth with dead men's
bones is rotten,
God of Time, thy likeness worships
thee.

4.

Lo! thy likeness of thy desolation,
Shape and figure of thy might, O
Lord,
Formless form, incarnate miscreation,
Served of all things living, and ab-
horred;
Earth herself is here thine incarnation,
Time, of all things born on earth
adored.

5.

All that worship thee are fearful of
thee;
No man may not worship thee for
fear:
Prayers nor curses prove not nor dis-
prove thee,
Move nor change thee with our
change of cheer:
All at last, though all abhorred thee,
love thee,
God, the sceptre of whose throne is
here.

6.

Here thy throne and sceptre of thy
station,
Here the palace paven for thy feet;
Here thy sign from nation unto nation
Passed as watchword for thy guards
to greet,—
Guards that go before thine exaltation,
Ages, clothed with bitter years and
sweet.

7.

Here, where sharp the sea-bird shrills
his ditty,
Flickering flame-wise through the
clear live calm,
Rose triumphal, crowning all a city,
Roofs exalted once with prayer and
psalm,
Built of holy hands for holy pity,
Frank and fruitful as a sheltering
palm.

8.

Church and hospice wrought in fault-
less fashion,
Hall and chancel bounteous and sub-
lime,
Wide and sweet and glorious as com-
passion,
Filled and thrilled with force of
choral chime,
Filled with spirit of prayer and thrilled
with passion,
Hailed a god more merciful than
Time.

9.

Ah! less mighty, less than Time pre-
vailing,
Shrunk, expelled, made nothing at
his nod,
Less than clouds across the sea-line
sailing,
Lies he, stricken by his master's rod.
"Where is man?" the cloister mur-
murs wailing;
Back the mute shrine thunders —
"Where is God?"

10.

Here is all the end of all his glory, —
Dust, and grass, and barren silent
stones.
Dead, like him, one hollow tower and
hoary
Naked in the sea-wind stands and
moans,
Filled and thrilled with its perpetual
story:
Here, where earth is dense with dead
men's bones.

11.

Low and loud and long, a voice for-
ever,
Sounds the wind's clear story like a
song.
Tomb from tomb the waves devouring
sever,
Dust from dust as years relapse
along;
Graves where men made sure to rest,
and never
Lie dismantled by the seasons' wrong.

12.

Now displaced, devoured and dese-
crated,
Now by Time's hands darkly dis-
interred,
These poor dead that sleeping here
awaited
Long the archangel's re-creating
word,
Closed about with roofs and walls
high-gated
Till the blast of judgment should be
heard.

13.

Naked, shamed, cast out of consecra-
tion,
Corpse and coffin, yea, the very
graves,
Scoffed at, scattered, shaken from
their station,
Spurned and scourged of wind and
sea like slaves,
Desolate beyond man's desolation,
Shrink and sink into the waste of
waves.

14.

Tombs, with bare white piteous bones
protruded,
Shroudless, down the loose collaps-
ing banks,
Crumble, from their constant place
detruded,
That the sea devours and gives not
thanks.
Graves where hope and prayer and
sorrow brooded
Gape and slide and perish, ranks on
ranks.

15.

Rows on rows, and line by line they
crumble,—

They that thought for all time
through to be.

Scarce a stone whereon a child might
stumble,

Breaks the grim field paced alone of
me.

Earth, and man, and all their gods wax
humble,

Here, where Time brings pasture to
the sea.

VII.

1.

But afar on the headland exalted,
But beyond in the curl of the bay,
From the depth of his dome deep-vault-
ed,

Our father is lord of the day.

Our father and lord that we follow,
For deathless and ageless is he ;
And his robe is the whole sky's hol-
low,

His sandal the sea.

2.

Where the horn of the headland is
sharper,

And her green floor glitters with fire,
The sea has the sun for a harper,
The sun has the sea for a lyre.

The waves are a pavement of amber,
By the feet of the sea-winds trod,
To receive in a god's presence-chamber
Our father, the god.

3.

Time, haggard and changeful and
hoary,

Is master and god of the land :
But the air is fulfilled of the glory
That is shed from our lord's right
hand.

O father of all of us ever,
All glory be only to thee

From heaven, that is void of thee
never,
And earth, and the sea.

4.

O Sun! whereof all is beholden,
Behold now the shadow of this death,
This place of the sepulchres, olden
And emptied and vain as a breath,
The bloom of the bountiful heather
Laughs broadly beyond in thy light,
As dawn, with her glories to gather,
At darkness and night.

5.

Though the gods of the night lie rot-
ten,
And their honor be taken away,
And the noise of their names forgotten,
Thou, Lord, art god of the day.
Thou art father, and saviour, and spirit,
O Sun, of the soul that is free,
And hath grace of thy grace to inherit
Thine earth and thy sea.

6.

The hills and the sands and the beaches,
The waters adrift and afar,
The banks and the creeks and the
reaches,
How glad of thee all these are !
The flowers, overflowing, overcrowded,
Are drunk with the mad wind's
mirth :
The delight of thy coming unclouded
Makes music of earth.

7.

I, last least voice of her voices,
Give thanks that were mute in me
long
To the soul in my soul that rejoices
For the song that is over my song.
Time gives what he gains for the giv-
ing,
Or takes for his tribute of me ;
My dreams to the wind ever-living,
My song to the sea.

SONNETS.

TO WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

THE larks are loud above our leagues
of whin,
Now the sun's perfume fills their glorious gold

With odor like the color all the world
Is only light and song and wind wherein
These twain are blent in one with shining din.

And now your gift, a giver's kingly-souled,

Dear old fast friend whose honors grow not old,

Bids memory's note as loud and sweet begin.

Though all but we from life be now gone forth

Of that bright household in our joyous north

Where I, scarce clear of boyhood just at end,

First met your hand; yet under life's clear dome

Now seventy strenuous years have crowned my friend,

Shines no less bright his full-sheaved harvest-home.

APRIL 20, 1882.

ON THE DEATHS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND GEORGE ELIOT.

Two souls diverse out of our human sight

Pass, followed one with love and each with wonder:

The stormy sophist with his mouth of thunder,

Clothed with loud words and mantled in the might

Of darkness and magnificence of night;
And one whose eye could smite the night in sunder,

Searching if light or no light were thereunder,

And found in love of loving-kindness light.

Duty divine and Thought with eyes of fire

Still following Righteousness with deep desire

Shone sole and stern before her and above

Sure stars and sole to steer by; but more sweet

Shone lower the loveliest lamp for earthly feet,—

The light of little children, and their love.

AFTER LOOKING INTO CARLYLE'S REMINISCENCES.

I.

THREE men lived yet when this dead man was young,

Whose names and words endure forever: one

Whose eyes grew dim with straining toward the sun,

And his wings weakened, and his angel's tongue

Lost half the sweetest song was ever sung,

But like the strain half uttered, earth hears none,

Nor shall man hear till all men's songs are done;

One whose clear spirit like an eagle hung

Between the mountains hallowed by his
his love
And the sky stainless as his soul above ;
And one, the sweetest heart that ever
spake
The brightest words wherein sweet wis-
dom smiled.
These deathless names by this dead
snake defiled
Bid memory spit upon him for their
sake.

II.

Sweet heart, forgive me for thine own
sweet sake,
Whose kind blithe soul such seas of
sorrow swam,
And for my love's sake, powerless as
I am
For love to praise thee, or like thee to
make
Music of mirth where hearts less pure
would break,
Less pure than thine, our life-un-
spotted Lamb.
Things hatefullest thou hadst not
heart to damn,
Nor wouldst have set thine heel on this
dead snake.
Let worms consume its memory with
its tongue,
The fang that stabbed fair Truth, the
lip that stung
Men's memories uncorroded with its
breath.
Forgive me, that with bitter words like
his
I mix the gentlest English name that is,
The tenderest held of all that know
not death.

A LAST LOOK.

SICK of self-love, Malvolio, like an
owl
That hoots the sun re-risen where
starlight sank,
With German garters crossed athwart
thy frank
Stout Scottish legs, men watched thee
snarl and scowl,

And boys responsive with reverberate
howl
Shrilled, hearing how to thee the
springtime stank,
And as thine own soul all the world
smelt rank,
And as thine own thoughts Liberty
seemed foul.
Now, for all ill thoughts nursed and ill
words given
Not all condemned, not utterly for
given,
Son of the storm and darkness, pass
in peace.
Peace upon earth thou knewest not
now, being dead,
Rest, with nor curse nor blessing on
thine head,
Where high-strung hate and strenu-
ous envy cease.

DICKENS.

CHIEF in thy generation born of men
Whom English praise acclaimed as
English-born,
With eyes that matched the world
wide eyes of morn
For gleam of tears or laughter, tender-
est then
When thoughts of children warned
their light, or when
Reverence of age with love and
labour worn,
Or godlike pity fired with godlike
scorn,
Shot through them flame that winged
thy swift live pen :
Where stars and suns that we behold
not burn,
Higher even than here, though high-
est was here thy place,
Love sees thy spirit laugh and
speak and shine
With Shakespeare, and the soft bright
soul of Sterne,
And Fielding's kindest might, and
Goldsmith's grace ;
Scarce one more loved or worthier
love than thine.

ON LAMB'S SPECIMENS OF
DRAMATIC POETS.

I.

IF all the flowers of all the fields on
earth
By wonder-working summer were
made one,
Its fragrance were not sweeter in the
sun,
Its treasure-house of leaves were not
more worth
Than those wherefrom thy light of mus-
ing mirth
Shone, till each leaf whereon thy pen
would run
Breathed life, and all its breath was
benison.
Beloved beyond all names of English
birth,
More dear than mightier memories !
gentlest name
That ever clothed itself with flower
sweet fame,
Or linked itself with loftiest names of
old
By right and might of loving ; I, that
am
Less than the least of those within thy
fold,
Give only thanks for them to thee,
Charles Lamb.

II.

So many a year had borne its own bright
bees
And slain them since thy honey-bees
were hived,
John Day, in cells of flower-sweet
verse contrived
So well with craft of moulding melo-
dies,
Thy soul perchance in amaranth fields
at ease
Thought not to hear the sound on
earth revived
Of summer music from the spring
derived
When thy song sucked the flower of
flowering trees.
But thine was not the chance of every
day :

Time, after many a darkling hour,
grew sunny,
And light between the clouds ere
sunset swam,
Laughing, and kissed their darkness all
away,
When, touched and tasted and ap-
proved, thy honey
Took subtler sweetness from the
lips of Lamb.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

CROWNED, girdled, garbed, and shod
with light and fire,
Son first-born of the morning, sov-
eign star !
Soul nearest ours of all, that wert
most far,
Most far off in the abysm of time, thy
lyre
Hung highest above the dawn-enkin-
dled quire
Where all ye sang together, all that
are,
And all the starry songs behind thy
car
Rang sequence, all our souls acclaim
thee sire.

"If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters'
thoughts,"
And as with rush of hurtling chariots
The flight of all their spirits were im-
pelled
Toward one great end, thy glory —
Nay, not then,
Not yet mightst thou be praised
enough of men.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

NOT if men's tongues and angels' all in
one
Spake, might the word be said that
might speak Thee.
Streams, winds, woods, flowers, fields,
mountains, yea, the sea,
What power is in them all to praise the
sun ?

His praise is this, — he can be praised
of none.

Man, woman, child, praise God for
him; but he

Exults not to be worshipped, but to
be.

He is; and, being, beholds his work
well done.

All joy, all glory, all sorrow, all strength,
all mirth,

Are his: without him, day were night
on earth.

Time knows not his from time's own
period.

All lutes, all harps, all viols, all flutes,
all lyres,

Fall dumb before him ere one string
suspires.

All stars are angels; but the sun is
God.

BEN JONSON.

BROAD-BASED, broad-fronted, bounte-
ous, multiform,

With many a valley impleached with
ivy and vine,

Wherein the springs of all the streams
run wine,

And many a crag full-faced against the
storm,

The mountain where thy Muse's feet
made warm

Those lawns that revelled with her
dance divine,

Shines yet with fire as it was wont
to shine

From tossing torches round the dance
a-swarm.

Nor less, high-stationed on the gray
grave heights,

High-thoughted seers with heaven's
heart-kindling lights

Hold converse: and the herd of
meaner things

Knows or by fiery scourge or fiery shaft
When wrath on thy broad brows has
risen, and laughed,

Darkening thy soul with shadow of
thunderous wings.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

AN hour ere sudden sunset fired the
west,

Arose two stars upon the pale deep
east.

The hall of heaven was clear for
night's high feast,

Yet was not yet day's fiery heart at rest.
Love leapt up from his mother's burn-
ing breast

To see those warm twin lights, as
day decreased,

Wax wider, till, when all the sun
had ceased,

As suns they shone from evening's
kindled crest.

Across them and between, a quicken-
ing fire,

Flamed Venus, laughing with appeased
desire.

Their dawn, scarce lovelier for the
gleam of tears,

Filled half the hollow shell 'twixt
heaven and earth

With sound like moonlight, mingling
moan and mirth,

Which rings and glitters down the
darkling years.

PHILIP MASSINGER.

CLOUDS here and there arisen an hour
past noon

Checked our English heaven with
lengthening bars

And shadow and sound of wheel-
winged thunder-cars

Assembling strength to put forth tem-
pest soon,

When the clear still warm concord of
thy tune

Rose under skies unscared by reddening
Mars,

Yet, like a sound of silver speech of
stars,

With full mild flame as of the mellow-
ing moon.

Grave and great-hearted Massinger, thy
face

High melancholy lights with loftier
grace

Than gilds the brows of revel: sad
and wise,
The spirit of thought that moved thy
deeper song,
Sorrow serene in soft calm scorn of
wrong,
Speaks patience yet from thy majes-
tic eyes.

JOHN FORD.

Hew hard the marble from the moun-
tain's heart
Where hardest night holds fast in
iron gloom
Gems brighter than an April dawn
in bloom,
That his Memnonian likeness thence
may start
Revealed, whose hand with high fune-
real art
Carved night, and chiselled shadow:
be the tomb
That speaks him famous graven with
signs of doom,
Intrenched inevitably in lines athwart,
As on some thunder-blasted Titan's
brow
His record of rebellion. Not the
day
Shall strike forth music from so
stern a chord,
Touching this marble: darkness, none
knows how,
And stars impenetrable of midnight,
may.
So looms the likeness of thy soul,
John Ford.

JOHN WEBSTER.

THUNDER: the flesh quails, and the
soul bows down.
Night: east, west, south, and north-
ward, very night.
Star upon struggling star strives into
sight,
Star after shuddering star the deep
storms drown.

The very throne of night, her very
crown,
A man lays hand on, and usurps
her right.
Song from the highest of heaven's
imperious height
Shoots, as a fire to smite some tower-
ing town.
Rage, anguish, harrowing fear, heart-
crazing crime,
Make monstrous all the murderous face
of Time
Shown in the spherul orbit of a glass
Revolving. Earth cries out from all
her graves.
Frail, on frail rafts, across wide-wallow-
ing waves,
Shapes here and there of child and
mother pass.

THOMAS DECKER.

OUT of the depths of darkling life,
where sin
Laughs piteously that sorrow should
not know
Her own ill name, nor woe be count-
ed woe;
Where hate and craft and lust make
drearier din
Than sounds through dreams that grief
holds revel in, —
What charm of joy-bells ringing,
streams that flow,
Winds that blow healing in each note
they blow,
Is this that the outer darkness hears
begin?
O sweetest heart of all thy time save
one,
Star seen for love's sake nearest to the
sun,
Hung lamplike o'er a dense and dole-
ful city,
Not Shakespeare's very spirit, how'er
more great,
Than thine toward man was more com-
passionate,
Nor gave Christ praise from lips
more sweet with pity.

THOMAS MIDDLETON.

A WILD moon riding high from cloud
to cloud,
That sees and sees not, glimmering
far beneath,
Hell's children revel along the shud-
dering heath
With dirge-like mirth and raiment like
a shroud;
A worse fair face than witchcraft's, pas-
sion-proud,
With brows blood-flecked behind
their bridal wreath,
And lips that bade the assassin's
sword find sheath
Deep in the heart whereto love's heart
was vowed;
A game of close contentious crafts and
creeds
Played till white England bring black
Spain to shame;
A son's bright sword and brighter soul,
whose deeds
High conscience lights for mother's
love and fame;
Pure gypsy flowers, and poisonous
courtly weeds:
Such tokens and such trophies crown
thy name.

THOMAS HEYWOOD.

TOM, if they loved thee best who called
thee Tom,
What else may all men call thee, see-
ing thus bright
Even yet the laughing and the weep-
ing light
That still thy kind old eyes are kindled
from?
Small care was thine to assail and
overcome
Time and his child Oblivion: yet of
right
Thy name has part with names of
lordlier might
For English love and homely sense of
home,
Whose fragrance keeps thy small sweet
bay-leaf young,

And gives it place aloft among thy
peers,
Whence many a wreath once
higher strong Time has hurled;
And this thy praise is sweet on Shake-
speare's tongue,—
“O good old man! how well in thee
appears
The constant service of the antique
world!”

JOHN MARSTON.

THE bitterness of death and bitterer
scorn
Breathes from the broad-leaved aloe-
plant whence thou
Wast fain to gather for thy bended
brow
A chaplet by no gentler forehead worn-
Grief deep as hell, wrath hardly to be
borne,
Ploughed up thy soul till round the
furlowing plough
The strange black soil foamed, as a
black-beaked prow
Bids night-black waves foam where its
track has torn.
Too faint the phrase for thee that only
saith
Scorn bitterer than the bitterness of
death
Pervades the sullen splendor of thy
soul,
Where hate and pain make war on
force and fraud,
And all the strengths of tyrants; whence
unflawed
It keeps this noble heart of hatred
whole.

GEORGE CHAPMAN.

HIGH priest of Homer, not elect in
vain,
Deep trumpets blow before thee,
shawms behind
Mix music with the rolling wheels
that wind
Slow through the laboring triumph of
thy train:

Fierce history, molten in thy forging
 brain,
 Takes form and fire and fashion from
 thy mind,
 Tormented and transmuted out of
 kind:
 But howsoe'er thou shift thy strenuous
 strain,
 Like Tailor¹ smooth, like Fisher²
 swollen, and now
 Grim Yarrington³ scarce bloodier
 marked than thou,
 Then bluff as Mayne's⁴ or broad-
 mouthed Barry's⁵ glee,
 Proud still with hoar predominance of
 brow
 And beard like foam swept off the
 broad blown sea,
 Where'er thou go, men's reverence
 goes with thee.

JOHN DAY.

DAY was a full-blown flower in heaven,
 alive
 With murmuring joy of bees and
 birds a-swarm,
 When in the skies of song yet flushed
 and warm
 With music where all passion seems to
 strive
 For utterance, all things bright and
 fierce to drive
 Struggling along the splendor of the
 storm,
 Day for an hour put off his fiery
 form,
 And golden murmurs from a golden
 hive
 Across the strong bright summer wind
 were heard,
 And laughter soft as smiles from
 girls at play,
 And loud from lips of boys brow-
 bound with May.

¹ Author of *The Hog* hath lost his Pearl.² Author of *Fuimus Troes*, or the *True Trojans*.³ Author of *Two Tragedies* in One.⁴ Author of *The City Match*.⁵ Author of *Ram-Alley*, or *Merry Tricks*.

Our mightiest age let fall its gentlest
 word,
 When Song, in semblance of a sweet
 small bird,
 Lit fluttering on the light swift hand
 of Day.

JAMES SHIRLEY.

THE dusk of day's decline was hard on
 dark
 When evening trembled round thy
 glowworm lamp
 That shone across her shades and
 dewy damp,
 A small clear beacon whose benignant
 spark
 Was gracious yet for loiterers' eyes to
 mark,
 Though changed the watchword of
 our English camp
 Since the outposts rang round Mar-
 lowe's lion ramp,
 When thy steed's pace went ambling
 round Hyde Park.

And in the thickening twilight under
 thee
 Walks Davenant, pensive in the paths
 where he,
 The blithest throat that ever carolled
 love
 In music made of morning's merriest
 heart,
 Glad Suckling, stumbled from his seat
 above,
 And reeled on slippery roads of alien
 art.

THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN.

SONS born of many a loyal Muse to
 Ben,
 All true-begotten, warm with wine or
 ale,
 Bright from the broad light of his
 presence, hail!
 Prince Randolph, nighest his throne of
 all his men,

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